

DANGERS OF SLIMMING DRUGS

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ABSOLUTE POWER

Clint Eastwood
still in charge
at 67
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BEST for JOBS

Graduates 26K
Managers 80K
Marketing 70K
Executives 100K

20 PAGES OF APPOINTMENTS

Outrage at 'fat cat' lottery pay rises

Directors' pay soars as awards to good causes fall

By CAROL MIDDLEY,
JON ASHWORTH
AND POLLY NEWTON



THE Camelot chairman has been summoned by the Government to explain why his executives have been given enormous pay rises when National Lottery ticket sales are sliding.

Tony Blair and Chris Smith, the National Heritage Secretary, were said to be outraged by reports that pay and bonuses for Camelot's ten executives rose by nearly 40 per cent to £2.3 million last year. At the same time, ticket sales dropped by 10 per cent and awards to good causes fell by £143 million.

Mr Smith has called Sir George Russell to give an account of the

company's actions, which he described as unacceptable. He is expected to warn Sir George that he risks losing public support for the Lottery — and therefore revenue — by such behaviour.

The Government intends to reform the Lottery with a Bill making it a non-profit-making enterprise, and Labour politicians believe that Camelot's slim hopes of having its licence renewed in 2001 have all but disappeared. But no action can be taken against the company unless it is in breach of its licence, and there is no suggestion that the pay awards

amount to that. Camelot is allowed to take 1 per cent of the Lottery proceeds as profit, and the pay rises come out of that. The amount paid to good causes is also laid down in the licence and the decrease there is the result of the declining ticket sales — mostly scratchcards.

But while the pay awards were quite legal, the leaking of a report showing that the sales director's income almost doubled to £330,000 and the chief executive enjoyed a 53 per cent rise to £590,000 will embarrass Camelot and renew criticism of "fat cat" salaries.

A Downing Street spokesman said: "The Prime Minister attaches the highest priority to reform of the Lottery. If these reports are true, his reaction is the same as that of the millions of people who buy Lottery tickets up and down the country — one of outrage."

Mr Smith said: "To be successful the Lottery needs the people's support. That is why I have started an urgent review. It is the people's money and I am determined that it should work in their interests."

Camelot confirmed the unaudited figures reported in *Marketing*

Week, but said that they were high because they included the first part of long-term bonuses based on the previous year's results when sales were better.

The bonus scheme rewards executives if they hit performance targets and could reach 140 per cent of their base salary. Joanna Manning-Cooper, the company spokesman, said: "The scheme recognises the successful launch of the lottery and the first three years of operation. All payment to directors comes out of Camelot's costs and it doesn't mean less money to the Government or

the good causes. The total paid to good causes was £1.27 billion, £2.38 billion went in prizes and Camelot profits were £46.8 million after tax.

The Lottery regulator, Oflot, said: "How they deal with their profits is a matter for them. It was a competitive contract and they came up with the best deal for the good causes and they kept the least for themselves."

Camelot is allowed to keep 5 per cent of Lottery proceeds — 4 per cent to cover operating costs and 1 per cent profit. The rest is split between prizes (50 per cent), good causes (28 per cent), tax (12 per cent) and retailers' commission (5 per cent).

Lottery winners, page 2
Wednesday draw, page 24

Nervous French markets plummet

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

FRENCH stocks plunged yesterday on rumours that opinion polls commissioned by banks are showing the Left poised to win France's knife-edge parliamentary elections on Sunday and usher in a new era of power-sharing.

At his last Cabinet meeting before the second-round ballot, conservative President Jacques Chirac said that a change of political direction would plunge the country into "confusion and weakness".

But in his frantic efforts to stave off a socialist victory after a disastrous first-round result for the centre-right coalition, M Chirac has himself emerged as a critically weakened figure.

The mood of Cabinet ministers emerging from the meeting ranged from defiant to defeatist. "We won't leave France to those who would throw it back into the past," Jacques Toubon, the Justice Minister, said angrily.

"Well, I've lived through two pleasant years in a Cabinet that did good work but clearly was not popular," said Guy Druet, the Sports Minister with the look of a man who knows when a race is lost.

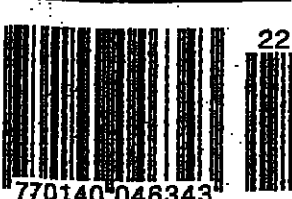
The stock market clearly felt the same, as word spread that opinion polls to appear outside France which cannot be published under French electoral law, were predicting a convincing left-wing victory.

The CAC-40 share index fell 4.4 per cent, even further than the 3.9 per cent drop on Monday, the steepest for four years. The index later regained some ground, to close 3.65 per cent down.

Chirac plea, page 17
William Rees-Mogg, page 21

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By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

Princess takes steps to promote ballet

DIANA, Princess of Wales, laughs with an enormous flock of "swans" from her beloved English National Ballet yesterday, during a visit to rehearsals at the Royal Albert Hall for the largest production of *Swan Lake* in Britain. Later, the Princess spoke of her desire to see ballet brought to a wider audience.

The Princess is patron of the

English National Ballet, which she maintained as one of her few charitable commitments when she scaled down her public life after her divorce, and she was clearly at ease with the ballerinas. The Princess will attend a gala performance, in the round, on Tuesday and she said she hoped this

would be the start of a new era for ballet.

"They've done it for opera, so why not ballet?" she told *The Times*. "This season represents a wonderful opportunity for English National Ballet to reach new, larger and enthusiastic audiences. This is a new and exciting

chapter for a company which already has a stunning past.

"I do hope that this season will mark the beginning of a renewed relationship between the Royal Albert Hall and English National Ballet, which will last well into the next millennium."

The Princess chatted with the 65 swans, more than twice the normal number, who will dance in the production. As they posed for photographs, she said she was embarrassed that they were all kneeling at her feet. "Get on with it," she teased the photographers as the dancers held her pose and she her smile.

She said she had once wished to be a ballerina but had grown too tall. "I rather overshot the mark," she said.



Ida Staples: quick on the studio buzzer

Wise old heads open up a record lead in TV quiz

By PAUL WILKINSON

A TEAM of part-time undergraduates including a 72-year-old widow has triumphed in the final of University Challenge.

Afterwards Ida Staples and the rest of her victorious Open University side went out clubbing with the humbled trainee doctors to celebrate setting a record score in the long running TV quiz.

Mike Smith, the losers' 20-year-old

captain, said: "It was just such a relief at the end when it was all over, then we got horrendously drunk. The Open University bunch were so outgoing."

In beating the Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School by 415 points to 65, the "amateurs" from the OU not only made a record score, but also won by the greatest margin in any of the contest's 700 rounds over the last 27 years.

The tally in the semi-final shown on BBC2 last night eclipsed the OU's own record 395-85 victory last January over

University College, Swansea. Mrs Staples, a retired pharmacist from Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, was the star of the OU team with her alacrity on the buzzer last night. She took her first OU degree in Arts after the death of her husband in 1988, and is now studying for a BSc in Earth Sciences.

The programme was pre-recorded and yesterday the twice-married Mrs Staples was in India. But after the previous record-breaking victory, she put her success down to "a solitary

youth and lots of travelling".

She began globe-trotting soon after she qualified as a pharmacist almost 50 years ago, taking a job in Zanzibar. After that she travelled in Africa, Australia and New Zealand, where she met her first husband. When they separated, she lived in Fiji before returning to Britain where she met her second husband. His dying words to her were: "Have lots of holidays and join the Open University."

The OU team is led by Harriet Continued on page 2, col 1

Bob Dylan 'critical' after heart attack

The singer Bob Dylan, 56, is critically ill in intensive care after a heart attack and his forthcoming tour of Britain has been cancelled.

The news was announced by the tour promoters but they would not say where he is. Dylan has homes in New York, Malibu and Minnesota.

Born Robert Zimmerman in 1941, Dylan took his name from Dylan Thomas. He was the musical voice of the Vietnam protest era and became a born-again Christian in 1979. His songs include *Blowin' in the Wind*, *Mr Tambourine Man* and *Maggie's Farm*.

Clinton plan for jobs aid

International measures to create jobs by cutting back on red tape and moving people off welfare into work are expected to be agreed by Tony Blair and President Clinton today as they meet to cement a stronger Anglo-American relationship. The highlight of Mr Clinton's visit to Britain will probably be his televised address to the Cabinet. Page 2

Moët threat to Guinness

The French Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton group threatened to force Guinness out of all joint-venture arrangements between the two companies, in a move that could derail the £23 billion planned merger between Guinness and Grand Metropolitan. Moët holds a 14.2 per cent stake in Guinness Page 25

Girl's killer

The father of Katerina Koneva, the murdered refugee schoolgirl, has told of how he came face to face with her escaping killer and stared into his "emotionless eyes". Page 3

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Ulster and jobs dominate Tony and Bill show

Philip Webster reports on how the Clintons' mix of business and pleasure may enhance the 'special relationship'

INTERNATIONAL measures to create jobs by cutting back on red tape and moving people off welfare into work are expected to be agreed by Tony Blair and President Clinton today as they meet to cement a stronger Anglo-American relationship.

Dropping in exactly a month after Mr Blair's spectacular election victory, the Clintons are planning to combine some serious talking with some serious tourism on a visit that has already been extended twice at the President's request. They will now

be spending most of the day in Britain. Some of their plans are being kept secret for security reasons but by last night the broad outlines of what one official called the "Tony and Bill and Hillary and Cherie show" were emerging.

The highlight for Mr Clinton will probably be his televised address to the Cabinet, an honour only very rarely accorded to visiting statesmen, soon after he arrives in

Downing Street just after 11.30am. Mrs Blair, meanwhile, will swiftly whisk Mrs Clinton next door to Number 11 for lunch before they go off together to the Globe Theatre for the afternoon performance of *Henry V*.

Mr Clinton will have extensive talks with Mr Blair in Number 10's White Room, where the Prime Minister hosted Baroness Thatcher only last week, before they are joined by officials for lunch.

Then Mr Blair and Mr Clinton will stage a joint press conference in the Downing Street rose garden, before going off for more socialising and some possible visits by Mr Clinton to "old haunts".

British officials said yesterday that top of the agenda would be jobs — Mr Blair has long been interested in Mr Clinton's ideas on job creation — and they are likely to agree a joint approach to tackle world unemployment to be

put to the world economic G7 summit in Denver next month.

Mr Clinton hoped that Mr Blair's victory would lead to movement in the Northern Ireland peace process. Today Mr Blair will ask Mr Clinton to use his influence both to call on Sinn Féin/IRA to introduce a new ceasefire and to warn them that the talks process will proceed without them if they do not. Mr Clinton will emphasise that he wants Brit-

ain to take a strong role in the European Union, stressing that he has never seen the so-called "special relationship" as meaning that Britain had to choose between the United States and Europe.

But it is clear that their main objective is to use their personal and political closeness to build an even more productive relationship between the two countries. "The political ties are strong; the personal chemistry is good," Mr Clinton had

originally planned a short stopover. But plans were changed for the second time after Mr Clinton spoke to Mr Blair in Paris on Tuesday as they signed a defence treaty, and expressed a wish to spend longer talking alone with him.

They will be on first name terms, having got to know each other when Mr Blair went to Washington in April last year. The address to the Cabinet is intended to symbolise the bonds between

the two countries and the importance Mr Blair attaches to their relationship.

Aides said Mr Blair was determined to use the keen interest that Labour's big win had aroused in the United States and elsewhere to raise Britain's standing in the world. "He is well aware that the honeymoon will not last forever, but while it does he is determined to use it for Britain's advantage," one said.

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Diane Kunz, page 20
Leading article, page 21

| CAMELOT SPENDING | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1995 | £1.41 bn | £1.66 bn |
| | Good causes DOWN | Profits* DOWN |
| 1996 | £1.27 bn | £1.68 m |
| | Boardroom salaries UP | |

Directors were always on a winner with lottery

By JON ASHWORTH

CAMELOT's directors were taking a leap in the dark when they signed up with the lottery consortium — but perhaps they could smell a winner. With the National Lottery heading in its third year, the avalanche of pay and bonuses appears to be unstoppable.

The key Camelot players were enticed from their regular jobs by lucrative packages. Tim Holley, the £500,000-a-year chief executive, began his career as a trainee at Barclays Bank in London, and later switched to computers, spending 15 years with ICL, which makes lottery terminals and cash registers. In 1982 he joined Racal Electronics, heading data communications and network services world-

wide, before his assignment to the Camelot team.

Mr Holley, 56, spent months preparing Camelot's lottery application, and faced tight deadlines ahead of the lottery's launch in November 1994. Recently he has been touring Camelot's regional offices, reassuring staff about their jobs. Mr Holley lives in a £2.5 million Georgian mansion in Richmond, southwest London.

David Rigg, director of communications at Camelot, worked hand-in-glove with Mr Holley in the run-up to the lottery launch. Educated at Millfield in the sixties, Mr Rigg read law at London University, then "bummed around" for a couple of years,

running discotheques and working on a pig farm in Wiltshire.

In 1974, he joined De La Rue, maker of bank notes and lottery tickets, and did a stint in Hong Kong, flying to remote corners of the Pacific in the pursuit of business. Dangerous encounters — he was shot at in Ethiopia, and briefly imprisoned during a visit to Libya — led to De La Rue's head office, where, in 1989, he took on the role of director of commercial development.

A chain-smoking bon vivant, Mr Rigg, 49, spent 3½ years assembling the Camelot players for their assault on the lucrative National Lottery licence. Highly-experienced in dealing with the media and

lobbying politicians — he has become Camelot's television "face".

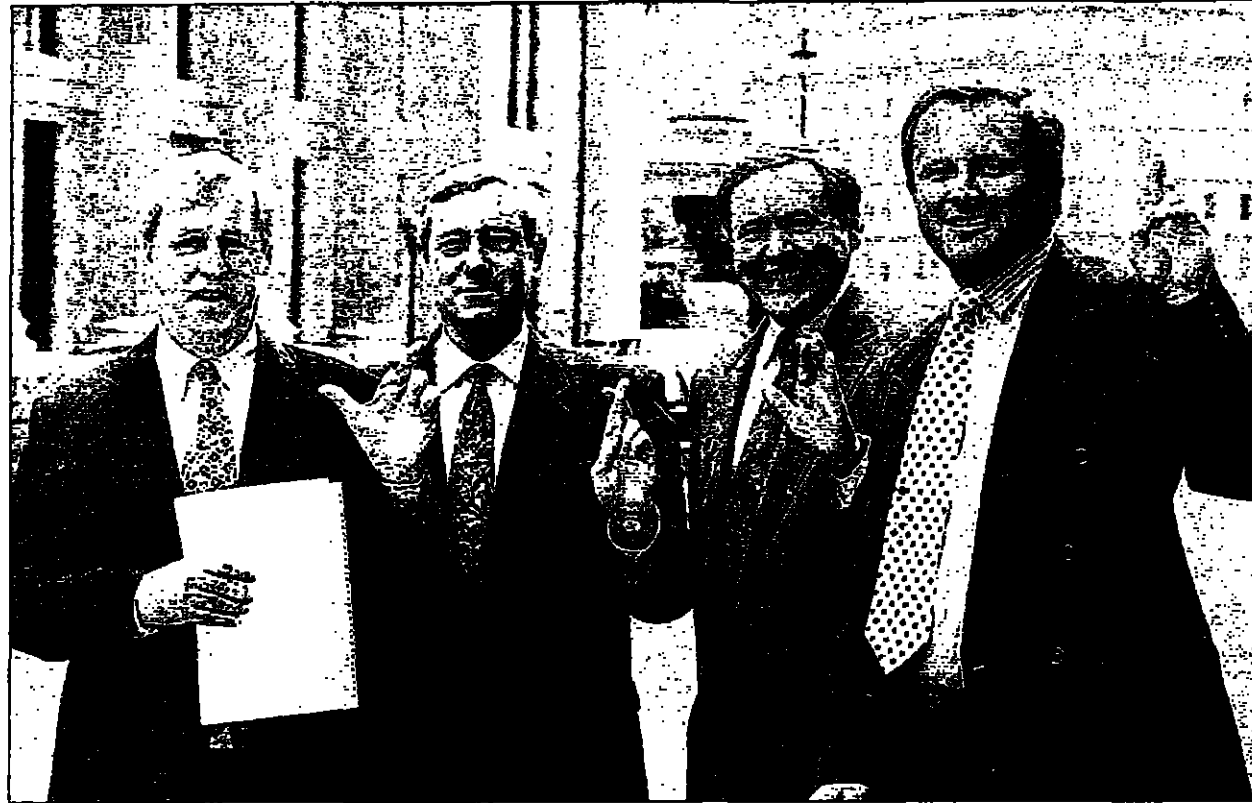
Lower key, but no less well-rewarded, is Peter Murphy, 40. Camelot's tennis-playing finance director. A former accountant with Price Waterhouse — an experience he shares with Peter Davis, the lottery regulator — Mr Murphy was finance director of De La Rue's biggest division, making him a natural choice when Mr Rigg was assembling the Camelot team. He lives in a mock-Tudor mansion in Buckinghamshire.

David Clark, 57, director of operations, ran Loto-Quebec Canada for six years, before signing up with GTEch, the American company that pro-

vides the technical muscle behind the National Lottery.

Sir George Russell, the Camelot chairman, joined the team in April 1995, succeeding Sir Ron Dearing, who led Camelot to its licence bid victory.

Headhunters say that Mr Holley and his colleagues are not highly paid in relation to other industries. Peter Brown, a partner in Heidrick & Struggles, a leading executive search firm, said the performance-related packages reflect the risks in taking on the job, adding: "With a brand-new business, it takes a fairly brave soul who will bet his career on making it work." Some would argue that the risks were minimal.



The men who won the lottery, from left: Tim Holley, Sir George Russell, David Rigg and Peter Murphy



Clark: director of operations

Clarke promises new look for Tory party

Kenneth Clarke last night promised root-and-branch reform of the Tory machine within six months if he is chosen next month to be Tory leader, and to hold another leadership election involving party members.

Mr Clarke said he wanted to involve members in building a new Conservatism for the next century. He also promised tough and effective Opposition, which he said was crucial to a Tory electoral comeback. "You have to land punches and land them hard," he told the Inns of Court Conservative Association.

John Redwood, one of Mr Clarke's five rivals in the leadership contest, said yesterday that he was not a candidate of the Right, but was running a "mainstream" campaign based on "traditional Conservative values". Speaking at a press conference in London, Mr Redwood said he was "fed up with all this Right/Left stuff. We want to run the Conservative Party as a whole in the interests of the wider electorate."

Smuggler flying home

A Briton jailed in Thailand for smuggling heroin is to be returned the UK next week to serve the rest of her sentence. Sandra Gregory, 31, a former teacher from Sowerby Bridge, near Halifax in west Yorkshire, has served 4½ years of a 22-year sentence, and will be eligible for parole in eight years under British prison rules. Three men in Thailand jails are also being transferred under an agreement which allows for the transfer of prisoners on compassionate grounds.

Film cash refund

A British film-maker is to repay a grant of £980,000 to National Lottery funds, after the success of the film it helped to finance. The £25 million *Shooting Fish*, starring Kate Beckinsale, won acclaim at Cannes and is to be screened on the Continent and in America after Fox bought the distribution rights. Gary Smith, 40, from Birmingham, who left his job as a City accountant and remortgaged his home to set up Winchester Films, said: "We are the first British movie to fully repay lottery money."

Relate sets up helpline

Relate is to offer marriage guidance counselling by telephone. The national service will begin on Monday and run every weekday from 9.30am to 1pm. The number is 0870 6012121. A spokeswoman said it wanted to help people who found it hard to come to a Relate centre and pilot studies had led it to anticipate being inundated with calls. "We want to make it possible for people to find help whenever they come to a rubbing point in a relationship, not only when they have already hit a major crisis."

Loch Lomond 'at risk'

Environmentalists said that the beauty of Loch Lomond, Britain's largest expanse of fresh water, would be irretrievably damaged if the area was not made into a National Park. More than 20 environmental agencies, including the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Ramblers Association, called on the Government to create National Parks in Scotland because of "growing alarm at the continuing decline of Scotland's finest landscape".

Teenage drink warning

Two brands of alcohol aimed at teenagers are criticised by the drink's industry watchdog, the Fortnum Group, for breaking its code of practice by appealing to the under-18s. Bliss, considered likely to appeal to girls who read a magazine with the same name, and Totpak, alcoholic sachets containing neat spirits which are easy to hide. Bullshit beer, Squal (a perry fruit mix), Screamin' Beaver beer and Kinky cider have been referred to an independent complaints panel.

Eric makes his mark

The former Manchester United footballer Eric Cantona has applied to register his name and the phrases "Ooh Aah Cantona" and "Cantona 7" as commercial trademarks. If successful, Cantona will be able to prevent anyone else selling clothing, magazines or posters featuring his name. The patents office in Newport, Gwent, has received the three applications, covering mainly clothing and stationery. Cantona has also applied for an EU trademark covering films, videos, teatowels and soft drinks.

OU team quick off their buzzers

Continued from page 1
Courtney, from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, a computer program analyst. The others are Martin Highways, a 33-year-old science teacher, from Powys, who is taking an MA in Education Studies, and Peter Bissett of Glasgow, who is reading a BA in Arts.

Mrs Courtney said: "Our victory was down to close teamwork and the combined breadth of knowledge of the team."

"I just felt sorry for the others, but they took it all very well. It was not age or experience that won, it was quickness on the buzzer and a great memory."

Her husband Richard, himself an Open University graduate in Material Sciences, said: "We have a lot of fan mail. Even Betty Boothroyd has sent my wife fan mail."

Mrs Courtney began reading Earth Science six years ago. She has two grown-up children, Alex and Matthew. Her husband, who is vice president of the British Association of Colliery Management and a Methodist preacher, said: "The Charing Cross team were no dunces by any stretch of the imagination. They are all very intelligent men and took what happened

THE WINNING ANSWERS

Questions successfully answered by the Open University team included:

1. Which family of 16th and 17th-century Dutch artists included Pieter the Elder? *Brueghel*.
2. Which constituent republic of the former Yugoslavia, known in Serbo-Croat as Crna Gora, the Black Mountain, is better known by its Venetian-Italian name meaning the same thing? *Monte Negro*.
3. Which British conservation body has as its symbol a branch of four oak leaves? *The National Trust*.

Both sides failed to answer the question: The 4th-century BC Greek Xenophon wrote the treatise *Peri Hippikes*, parts of which are still valid today, and is the first known exposition on which subject? *Horsemanship*.

The Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School wrongly identified Billie Holiday as the artist singing *Let's Face The Music And Dance* in a music starter. The OU correctly answered *Ella Fitzgerald*.

The medics correctly answered: What are the three processes by which energy may be transferred from one body to another. *Conduction, convection and radiation*.

Peter Quinn, the producer for Granada TV, the programme's makers, said: "It must be remembered that Charing Cross are medical students, studying in a narrow field: the Open University come from a wide band of experiences and learning."

with good grace." But it was more than 10 minutes into the game — when the OU were already 110 points ahead — before the medics got to the buzzer first, appropriately on a medical question.

They sparked huge cheers when they correctly answered

"virulence" to the starter question: "What word describes the power of a bacteria or virus to cause disease and can be measured by how many people are infected, how quickly it spreads and how many people die from it?"

By the final gong they had

correctly answered four starter questions and five bonuses.

The combined age of the Charing Cross team, all in their second year, was just 79, slightly more than Mrs Staples.

Mike Smith said: "We knew they were superior, the youngest player was double my age. They were older and wiser, but we didn't think it was going to be that bad."

Mr Smith, from Worthing, West Sussex, a former pupil at Christ's Hospital in Horsham, Surrey, added: "We didn't really expect to get that far in the quiz. We got together originally around a quiz machine in a bar, we're a very different team to those that normally enter."

Mr Smith's team mates were Esson Adobah, 20, of Erith, Kent, who went to Bedley Heath Grammar, James Foxlee, 20, of Reigate, Surrey, who went to Reigate Grammar and Ajay Ojha, 19, of Blackburn, Lancashire, who went to the town's sixth form college.

The OU team's victory means a place in the final against Magdalen College, Oxford, next week. The programme has already been recorded, but the result is a secret.

Staff moves upset Whitehall chief

By POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE head of the Civil Service recruitment watchdog cautioned the Government yesterday against making further political appointments to Whitehall, Sir Michael Bett, who is responsible for ensuring that senior Government staff are selected following "fair and open competition".

It was not openly critical of moves made so far by Labour to place political staff in Civil Service jobs. But the Civil Service Commissioner said he would be "concerned" if Britain moved towards an American system in which a large number of senior civil servants were replaced every time there was a new Government. "It would be a constitutional departure from what we have today. It may be that that is a constitutional departure that the Government and Parliament want, but I think if they do it should be done openly."

His comments, as he published his annual report on recruitment in Whitehall, follow a change in the regulations since the election to allow

the appointment of up to three political staff to Civil Service positions in the Prime Minister's office. The change was requested by the Government and allowed by the Privy Council on May 3, at a meeting over which the Queen presided and which was attended by four ministers. It was not put before MPs.

Appointments made so far under the new rules include Alastair Campbell as Chief Press Secretary and Jonathan Powell as Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. Asked if he had been consulted about the so-called Order in Council which amended the rules, Sir Michael said: "I was involved in the discussion of it." He said he would be "very concerned" if the number of political appointees were "just being drafted in. That would be a direct breach of the principle I am here to uphold."

Two weeks ago, the Conservative Chief Whip, Alastair Goodlad, complained about the "increasing politicisation" of the Civil Service.

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'When you saw Katrina's face, it was like that of an angel ... for her, the world was there to love'

Father tells of encounter with girl's cold killer

By Stewart Tendler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE father of Katerina Koneva, the murdered refugee schoolgirl, yesterday told how he came face to face with her escaping killer and staring into his emotionless eyes.

Katerina, 12, described by her father, Trajce Konev, as an angel, was found strangled at her home in Hammersmith, west London, last week after he disturbed an intruder.

He chased the man and returned to find her dying. The family had fled from Macedonia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, four years ago to make a new home in Britain.

Mr Konev, 41, struggling with his grief and speaking in broken English, described how he confronted the stocky, balding intruder as he leapt from a window of the first floor flat. "He was crouched down. I saw him face on face, face on face."

"I said, 'What are you doing here?' He was so calm, so cool. I can't believe it. His eyes didn't move, he was just looking at me, then he ran off down the street."

Mr Konev told a press conference that the murderer "is not a man, it's a monster without feelings. Animals don't kill like that, without reason."

Mr Konev, who is studying



Katerina Koneva: "with friends, she was so kind"

English, said he last saw his daughter alive and well as he put her on a bus to school on the morning of her death.

He said: "It was just a usual morning. She just smiled. When you saw her face, she told you everything. You don't need to listen to words from an angel."

That afternoon, Mr Konev came home to find that the door to the living room was jammed shut.

At first he thought Katerina was playing games with

him.

He told how he shouted through the door: "Katerina, Katerina, open the door. Nobody answered. She likes to play with me."

He shouted through the door for her to open it but there was no reply. Growing alarmed, he looked through the keyhole. He saw Katerina's schoolbag on the sofa and glimpsed a man's black shoes.

Realising that there was an intruder in the flat, Mr Konev ran back into the street and saw him in the next door

garden.

"He was crouched down. I saw him face on face, face on face. I said, 'What are you doing here?'"

"He was so calm, so cool. I can't believe it. His eyes didn't move, he was just looking at me, then he ran off down the street."

The man, who was of Mediterranean appearance, had a splash of blood on his face.

Mr Konev grabbed him but he produced a knife. "I thought he was going to kill me. I turned a little and he managed to escape."

Despite a further chase, Mr Konev eventually lost his prey, who escaped the area by hijacking a Fiat Uno and ejecting the two women occupants at knifepoint.

It was only when he returned to his flat that Mr Konev discovered his dying daughter. Katerina was pronounced dead at hospital later.

At the press conference at Kensington police station yesterday, Mr Konev cradled his weeping 31-year-old wife Zakalina to his chest and held her hand.

The couple have a son, Kristian, aged six. Mr Konev said that his daughter came top at school in everything she did, from mathematics and music to sport. "With friends, she was so kind. All her friends loved her. For her,



Trajce and Zakalina Konev yesterday: they fled to Britain to escape the dangers of the former Yugoslavia

the world was there to love."

Detective Superintendent Ken Woodward, who is leading the murder hunt, said there was no sign of forced entry or of any sexual or robbery motive for the

killing. Police have issued an E-fit computerised likeness of the killer, who is described as aged 45-50, about 5ft 5in and stockily built. He was balding but had greying dark hair at the sides and back.

On the day of the killing he wore a light-coloured jacket, an open-necked shirt, dark trousers and dark shoes. He carried a black canvas-type bag.

Mr Konev appealed: "At the first chance, tell the police,

inform the police, tell some body. We don't know how many children he could kill."

Anyone with information is asked to contact the murder incident room on 0181 246 0731.

Baseball bat mob forces students to flee hostel

By A Staff Reporter

A SCOTTISH university has had to evacuate a hall of residence after a mob armed with baseball bats and knives laid siege for four nights.

The men, aged between 16 and 30, broke into the hall and smashed furniture and windows and attacked students. Every window was broken and the 70 students have been moved out. Students at Hills side halls of residence in Menzieshill, Dundee, set off fire alarms to alert emergency services, which were also stoned when they arrived.

The riot is the latest in a series of attacks by local youths on students in Dundee. Trouble began when two youths were refused entry to a party. They returned with a gang and began pelting windows.

Events came to a head on Saturday when a gang attacked the building and broke in. Andy Jackson, the Students' Association president, said: "There has always been intimidation by youths and it was not uncommon for windows to be broken but things have gone completely mad. We have girls in tears, too scared to even go back to their rooms for their belongings."

Police have stepped up patrols to make sure students at the neighbouring Dalrymple Hall are not targeted. The University of Abertay Dundee, joint owners of the property with the University of Dundee, said: "We are very disappointed over recent events and we take them very seriously. It is very important that our students are left to study and go about their business in peace."

Actor halts play to limit exposure of Nicole au naturel

By Damian Whitworth

FOR the actor Christopher Cazenove it was simply a matter of playing the hero to his co-star's damsel in distress — even if it meant stopping the show.

The woman whose honour needed defending was Estelle Skornik, perhaps best known as Nicole from the Renault Clio television advertisements. In *Home Truths*, which opened at the Theatre Royal in Newcastle on Tuesday night, she was required to take her clothes off. Unfortunately this act attracted the attentions of those one would not normally expect to find at the theatre.

In the front row, undetected by security staff but with a suspiciously bulging anorak, was a freelance photographer. As Ms Skornik's garments were removed, several flashguns went off. The intrusion during such a sensitive scene was too much for Mr Cazenove, an Old Etonian

and a former star of *Dynasty*.

He turned to the audience and announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, please stop that." One photographer refused to comply and after finishing his film bolted towards the exit. "Stop that person," belated Mr Cazenove. Several men leapt from their seats but the stocky photographer burst through, evaded security men and fled down the street.

After the commotion died down, Mr Cazenove thanked the audience and carried on. Outside, a lengthy pursuit led to the apprehension of the photographer. He was made to hand over his film and Mr Cazenove reported this to loud applause after the interval. However, a grainy photograph appeared in *The Sun* yesterday.

A spokesman for the theatre said: "The actors are a little upset. It's a very disturbing thing to happen in a piece that's so poignant."



Christopher Cazenove leapt to the defence of Ms Skornik when flashguns disrupted a nude scene

Chef must serve time after wedding treat turned sour

By Lin Jenkins

IT WAS a perfect wedding reception. The sun shone as 300 guests dined in a poolside marquee at the country home of the groom, a property developer. The chef was a childhood friend who worked unpaid as a wedding gift.

The guests enjoyed themselves into the night, dancing to a live jazz band. Within hours the groom, Neil Morgan, 35, was on a transatlantic flight to his honeymoon in the Bahamas with his bride, Fiona, when he suddenly doubled up in pain. In Britain, three-quarters of the guests were struck down with stomach aches, cramps, diarrhoea and vomiting. Six were so ill with salmonella poisoning that they were admitted to hospital.

Yesterday the chef, Alain Baxter, 33, was jailed for four months for breaching the

Food Safety Act in his celebratory meal for his old friend. Tunbridge Wells magistrates had been told that as temperatures reached 85F, food had been left standing in dishes covered in clingfilm inside the marquee for up to four hours.

The menu included seafood followed by roast turkey, rib of beef and chicken. Baxter made the mayonnaise by hand using raw eggs and olive oil, and used it with the prawns in the first course and to make coleslaw. A former chef to the Saudi royal family, he was in charge of the catering. He was paid £4,785 for the food, but donated his labour.

Peter Blackwell, chairman of the bench, told him: "You have experience of 15 years of catering and had a duty of care to provide food fit for human consumption. Quite evidently it was not."

Kuldeep Clair, for the defence, said: "The extreme heat increased the rate at which the food was contaminated. He has lost two stones in weight since the incident because of stress."

The Morgans, who had to cut short their honeymoon, were not in court yesterday. Elizabeth Johnston, the bride's mother, said: "I am really sorry for the man. He did not mean to poison us all."

Justine Beard, environmental health officer for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, said: "We want this case to stand as a warning to others to take precautions."

"The main problems were lack of refrigeration, the undercooking of poultry and the use of raw eggs in the mayonnaise which should always be avoided at large functions such as this."

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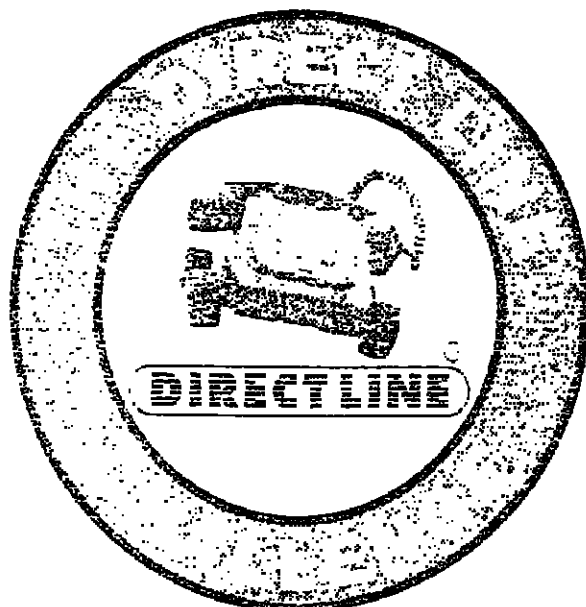
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Songs and tears as sentimental journey leads women to relatives they were told to forget

After 50 years, the 'stolen children' are finally home

By DANIEL McGRORY

AFTER 50 years apart, words could not express the joy of reunion for sisters Rose Kruger and Margaret Severs, who were separated by the wartime child immigrant scheme.

"I'm sorry this took so long," Rose, 61, whispered tearfully as she embraced her sister after stepping from a flight with 39 other women who were shipped to Australia as children.

For many like Rose Kruger, this will be the first chance to meet their families. Rose was 11 and living in a Catholic orphanage in Edinburgh when she was told one morning that she was going on a holiday. Her sister was three years older and so escaped the forced migration. Ten thousand children were sent to Australia by Catholic charities to "provide good blood stock and a source of cheap labour".

Mrs Severs, 65, explained: "Our father died before the war and mother was an alcoholic, an inadequate, and had to give us away. I thought Rose was just being sent for a couple of weeks' holiday. Nobody would tell me what happened to her."

Eight years ago Mrs Severs, of Guildford, received a telephone call from a voluntary group that had been trying to trace the missing children. She was told that her sister had survived, having been sent to work in a Catholic orphanage in Perth in 1947. They communicated by telephone and letter, but only now has Rose found the money to make the visit.

Mrs Kruger said: "After a few years we were told we had no parents, no family, so forget them. Life there was sad and unpleasant. I never thought I would see this moment."

early-morning rendition of *Walking Matilda*. Most relatives had decided to wait for a private reunion later in the visit. But the women, all brought up in Sisters of Nazareth and Sisters of Mercy orphanages near Perth, were greeted by Yvonne Radzevicius, 54. She returned to Britain in 1979 to trace her family but yesterday recognised the faces of those she had grown up with in the Nazareth House orphanage at Geraldton and ran towards them. Grabbing each one in turn, she said: "We were family to each other because we were all we had. Nobody else wanted us. When you are a child you do as you are told. Nobody asked if this is how we wanted to live our lives."

Thirty-five charities operated the child immigrant scheme, which continued until 1967. The children were mainly sent to work in orphanages and religious schools. The 40 women have named their trip "The Sentimental Journey". Not all, however, will return to Australia with happy memories of reunions with relatives. The son of Mary Barker discovered that her mother was living in Poole, Dorset, but was told that she wanted nothing to do with the child she had given away in infancy. "I wish there had been someone here to meet me. It's a bit sad, but I can't blame her," Mrs Barker, 59, said.

"I have a stepister as well, but they do not know I am coming. I hope to call on them. If they shut the door on me, at least I tried. I want at least to know what my roots were."

Mrs Barker, who has four children and lives in a suburb of Perth, sailed to Australia in September 1947 on the cruise ship *Osterly*. Most of the women on the *Sentimental Journey* were on the same ship. "As a nine-year-old I had a great time on the boat. I thought of it as a great big house. Truth is, none of us knew what lay in store."

Eileen Ashby, 57, believes the British and Australian Governments should apologise to the women. "I feel bitter. Can you imagine a country sanctioning the idea of stealing its children and forcibly migrating them? It is one of the darkest chapters of British history."

"I was eight when I was sent away with one little bag of clothes. I had nine brothers and sisters but my mum couldn't look after me so I was sent to an orphanage in Cheltenham. All we did was swap

one workhouse for another in Australia. "My mother collapsed when she was told I was still alive and was in Perth. No one ever said sorry. Those behind this sick scheme did not think we would grow up and want identities."

Her husband, Brian Ashby, helped to organise and fund the trip, which began yesterday with a tour of London. There will also be a visit to Ireland, where many of the women's families originated.

Mrs Ashby said governments had kept secret the details of the women's true identities. She found her mother after a 30-year search and was able to meet her before her death last year. On this visit she will search

for her father in Limerick. When Eileen Evert, 59, saw her sister, Liz Sennitt, emerge at Heathrow, she told her: "Welcome home. You took your time."

The sisters had not seen each other since being separated in an orphanage at Hamersmith, west London. Both have two children. Mrs Evert said: "We bitterly regret being

split up. Those years have gone and we have to make the best of what remains."

Sister Leonie O'Brien of the Sisters of Nazareth and a Perth-based charity, said: "What we did was a mistake but let us move on. We hope this will be a healing and enjoyable time."



"Sorry this took so long": Rose Kruger reunited with Margaret Severs, right, the sister she last saw 50 years ago

Man jailed for romance with girl, 16

A social worker who was sacked over his romance with a 16-year-old girl he met at a Northumberland children's home was jailed for 12 months for contempt. Patrick Tighe, 48, had broken court orders banning him from contacting the girl. The High Court heard that they planned to marry and had her parents' approval. Tighe has already served two sentences for contempt. Now he must not contact the girl until her 18th birthday.

Heroin charge

Trevor Johnson, 35, charged with possession of heroin with intent to supply, was remanded in custody by North Avon magistrates, the day after police seized heroin worth £2 million at Bristol Parkway station.

Mystery death

No cause has been found for a woman's death as she slept. An inquest at Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, was told that Fiona Pearce, 39, a mother of four, probably suffered a heart malfunction. Verdict: natural causes.

Hall deco rated

The Mecca Bingo Hall in Mersey Square, Stockport, is to receive Grade II listing for its art deco features. The former Plaza cinema, built in 1932, is described as "an exceptionally complete example of a 1930s super cinema".

Take the plunge

A couple are to marry in a tank at Deep-Sea World, near Edinburgh, surrounded by 3,500 fish, including tiger sharks, for whom feeding will be brought forward a day to "ensure maximum safety".

CORRECTION

A report (May 14) implied that Tim Collins MP was the source of suggestions that Ann Widdecombe MP had received flowers and chocolates from Derek Lewis, former head of the Prison Service. Mr Collins asks us to make clear that such suggestions are entirely without foundation. We apologise for the error.

Doctors accused of 'realigning' evidence on Ecstasy girl's death

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND'S leading liver surgeons were accused yesterday of covering up evidence and wasting vital time in the case of a 15-year-old girl who died of liver failure after she was refused a transplant.

On the final day of the Fatal Accident Inquiry into Michelle Paul's death, David Burnside, for Miss Paul's family, said medical experts "realigned" their evidence once they realised the seriousness of the inquiry. He said they knew the public would have found it difficult to accept that Michelle, who had dabbled with Ecstasy, had been denied a transplant on moral grounds.

Michelle died on November 27, 1995, 23 days after experimenting with Ecstasy at a rave near her home in Mairack, Aberdeen. She was admitted to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on November 17 and transferred to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary four days later.

Michelle's mother, Carolann Paul, and her grandmother, Margaret Pirie, told the inquiry at Aberdeen Sheriff Court that Michelle was denied a transplant on moral grounds because of a family history of drug abuse and because she had taken Ecstasy. Mrs Paul had been a drug addict but had recovered.

That claim has been denied by the doctors at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, who said the decision was made on medical grounds although doctors have admitted that Michelle's family background had been taken into account.

Mr Burnside said that under cross-examination Dr Hilary Sanley, Surgeon of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary's transplant team, had agreed that there were no medical reasons against giving Michelle a transplant when she arrived in Edinburgh. But he said vital time was wasted

researching her family background, during which time her condition deteriorated.

Mr Burnside said: "I think that a great number of members of the public would find it hard to accept that a 15-year-old child, in a position where transplantation represented her only chance of survival, was denied an organ on grounds which I submit are clearly related to her background."

He said there had been an undue delay on a liver test at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary which might have brought to attention sooner the serious deterioration in Michelle's condition. "The time lost was vital in the circumstances and was a significant factor in assessing the events leading up to Michelle's death."

Alf Vannet, the procurator fiscal in the case, said he too was concerned at the delay which he called a "very important omission" given that time was of the essence.

During the final submission, Sheriff Graeme Warner asked whether it might have been easier for doctors to tell the inquiry Michelle had been medically beyond help. He suggested it would have been embarrassing for them, in the glare of public scrutiny, to be seen to have denied a transplant because of Michelle's background.

But Norma Shippin, for Edinburgh Royal Infirmary NHS Trust, denied any suggestion that doctors had misled the court. She said: "It is very wrong to suggest that any of these doctors are trying to mislead this inquiry by looking back and trying to make up a different version of events." She said it would be a "very serious thing to do" to question the doctors' integrity. Sheriff Warner will deliver his findings in several weeks.

How Peter Pan inspired a boy to fly

By JOHN VINCENT

LIKE most young boys, Adrian Tudor Jones possessed a vivid imagination. He twice wrote to J.M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, asking to be taught to fly like the boy who never grew up, and sending him drawings.

Nearly 70 years later Barrie's touching replies have surfaced at a London sale room. At Christie's on June 25, the author's two replies to the boy - who would have been about eight when they were written in 1928 - are expected to fetch up to £1,500.

One, which was written on New Year's Day, reads: "Dear Adrian, Thank you so very much for the beautiful pictures you sent me. I think they're lovely. I hope you are coming to see me this Christmas. Love from Peter Pan."

P.S. I'm afraid it will be some time before I can come and teach you to fly as I am quite busy. But I'm sure you can dance quite well without



One of J.M. Barrie's letters to Adrian Tudor Jones

anybody teaching you. I do like your pictures you draw. P.P."

The other, dated a fortnight later, reads: "Dear Adrian, Thank you so much for the lovely picture you sent me. I was so very pleased to get it. I am very sorry indeed but I'm afraid I can't teach you to fly, because it is impossible without the Fairy Dust, and I've only got a tiny

supply which I have to use for Wendy, John and Michael."

"I am very sorry, but perhaps in a few years' time I will be able to give you some. Thank you again ever so much for the picture. I do love it. With love from Peter Pan."

Adrian did grow up to fly - he became a pilot during the Second World War. But the story did not have a happy

ending: he died after being shot down over the sea.

The letters are being sold by a descendant of the original recipient. She declined to give further details of Adrian, but said yesterday: "The letters have been a family treasure since their arrival and have been passed down through the generations. I hope the new owners will enjoy the charm and kindness of these letters as the legend and appeal of Peter Pan continues to new generations of young fans who want to fly."

Sir James Barrie, born 1860, was the son of a Scottish weaver. He came to London as a freelance writer in 1885 after working as a journalist in Nottingham. After two successful novels about Scottish rural life he wrote mainly for the theatre, his best-known plays being *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) and *Peter Pan* (1904).

He was created a baronet in 1913 and appointed to the Order of Merit in 1922. He died in 1937.

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Doctors say 'magic bullet' weight-loss pills can kill

REPORTS BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT, AND KATHRYN KNIGHT

PEOPLE not only waste their money, but risk death if they take "magic bullet" pills to lose weight.

Issuing guidelines on drugs to treat obesity, the Royal College of Physicians said yesterday that a limited range of prescription-only appetite suppressants should be used only as a last resort by people who had tried to lose weight by dieting, exercising and changing their lifestyle. Amphetamines and all preparations sold over the counter as slimming pills were dangerous, addictive or both.

"Everybody is always looking for the 'magic bullet' but it simply does not exist," Peter Kopelman, the chairman of the working party set up by the Health Department last

year to investigate the use of drugs in slimming treatments, said. "You don't need a magic bullet to lose weight. The thing to do is to set realistic targets and realise that the svelte ideal is simply not achievable for some."

The working party was set up because of growing concern that private slimming clinics were prescribing pills to patients who did not need such drastic treatment, and were then not monitoring them properly.

David London, a registrar of the college, said that there were no figures about how many patients were being treated by private slimming clinics but there was anecdotal evidence that it was a growing number. Patients often did

not tell their general practitioner what was being prescribed for them. This could result in double treatment, which increased the danger. Doctors in clinics, therefore, should ensure that patients' GPs are made fully aware of any treatment being given. The General Medical Council is to police the new guidelines.

The first line of treatment for the obese should not be to prescribe drugs, but to advise patients on a good diet, increase their physical activity and help them to change to a healthier lifestyle by stopping smoking and excessive drinking. Only if the patient stuck carefully to this discipline for at least three months without losing 10 per cent in weight should drugs be considered.



Kopelman: not everyone can be the svelte ideal

BESIT
Obesity is gauged by body mass index. An ideal index figure is about 22; anyone with an index of more than 30 is clinically obese. An index rating is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms (1kg = 2.2lb) by the square of their height in metres (2.54cm = 1in). By this calculation, a woman 1.6m tall (5ft 3in) would have a perfect index of 21.5 if she weighed 55 kg (121 lb). If, however, she weighed 78 kg (172 lb) she would have an index of 30.5 and would be obese. As a rough guide, obesity starts with a 40 in waist measurement in men and 37 in women.
□ A reduction of just 10 per cent in an obese person's body weight has enormous health benefits.
□ Adult obesity in England more than doubled between 1980 and 1994. During that period the condition has grown among men from 6 per cent to 13.8 per cent, and among women from 8 per cent to 17.3 per cent.
□ The risk of death within 26 years increases by 1 per cent for each extra pound added between the ages of 30 and 42, and by 2 per cent between 50 and 62.
□ Obesity causes high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease, as well as undue wear on leg joints.

Prescribed treatments successful but long-term effects are unknown

ADIFAX

Adifax: successful trial

THE appetite suppressants most often prescribed are dextenfuramine and phentermine. Both work on the central nervous system. Doctors are advised not to prescribe the drugs for more than 12 weeks if the patient has not lost more than 10 per cent of body weight at the end of that course. Both drugs can cause high blood pressure.
□ Dextenfuramine, marketed as Adifax, is the most successful appetite suppressant. A year-long trial on 800

THE DRUGS

obese patients found that 30 per cent of those on the drug lost a significant amount of weight compared with 2 per cent of those taking a placebo. On average those on the drug lost 10 kg and their waist shrank by 10 cm. Those on the placebo lost half that amount in weight and girth.
□ There has been no study of the

long-term effects of these drugs. The report recommends that they should not be prescribed for more than a year.
□ Drugs that should not be prescribed for obesity are amphetamines, which can become addictive; diuretics, which have no effect on fat; and thyroid hormones, which are contra-indicated in those without thyroid problems.
□ Slimming remedies on general sale are either useless or dangerous, the Royal College of Physicians says.

These include Fat Magnets, Fat Attract, Fat Binder and Lipobind — capsules that include chitosan, a fine powder made from prawn and crab shells. The pills claim to speed food through the intestine and to absorb fat from the digestive tract. AromaTrim — "a blend of natural aniseed, hickory, fennel and grapefruit oils" — is designed to be sniffed whenever hunger pangs begin and is claimed to end cravings in 90 seconds.



Kate Fowler: "In the end, I was one of the lucky ones"

'In days I piled on the 12lb I'd lost and 12 more

KATE FOWLER, a 47-year-old grandmother from Delamere, Cheshire, was prescribed slimming pills by her doctor in the 1970s.

"Like most women at the time I was desperate to lose weight," she said. "I am 5ft 5in and at the time weighed 12 or 13st. Looking back I wasn't that overweight but I was very depressed about it and went to my GP."

"On my first visit he told me to eat sensibly and do some exercise but it didn't seem to work so I went back and he put me on a kind of amphetamine."

"I took it immediately for two weeks and it was like being on speed. I was raring to go. I couldn't sleep, I had so much energy. I was up at 5am cleaning windows and hoovering, zipping around like a madwoman. My family really noticed the difference because all of a sudden I was so vain."

"I felt no hunger and ate nothing more than an apple each day. I lost 7lb in the first week and 5lb in the second. I thought it was marvellous. But when the prescription ran out I went from being as high as a kite to being like a slug on the floor. I was suffering

withdrawal symptoms and went to the doctor but he wouldn't give me any more, despite my pleas. I was absolutely worn out and desperate for some more to make me feel energetic again."

"My appetite came straight back but, because I went from eating an apple to eating 'normally' again, it was like stuffing my face. Within days I piled on the 12lb I'd lost and then put on 12lb more, and my weight kept creeping up and up."

"In the end, I was one of the lucky ones because my doctor didn't give me any more. It could have been endless. After a few weeks the effects passed and because I could remember how awful it was I was never tempted again."

"The thing about pills is they don't teach you how to eat healthily, which is what you need. They teach you to not eat at all. But it is very seductive. As a Weight-watcher leader I meet thousands of people desperate to lose weight and for some of them it is easier to take a few pills than go through a diet and exercise programme."

'No questions, no explanations'

LIZA GREENE, 31, a commercial producer from Kingston, Surrey, went to a slimming clinic three years ago after becoming depressed about her weight.

"I am 5ft 6in and weighed 9st but I was depressed about my body shape. I went to a clinic in north London which was above a shop and it was like getting pills over the counter."

"I filled in a form with the receptionist, which took about five minutes, and was then ushered in to see the doctor. It was like a conveyor belt: there were lots of women there waiting in line for their turn."

"The doctor gave me a month's supply of pills which were already measured out in the jar. She didn't say what they were other than to tell me they were appetite suppressants and to take some of the vitamin tablets she gave me as well. There was no medical discussion and she told me to come back in a month."

"I took one pill each morning and one in the afternoon and within ten days was feeling really rough. I was feeling nauseous, had palpitations and couldn't sleep. I actually felt more hungry as well; maybe my brain was telling me I needed more food because of all the nervous energy I had. I was also behaving quite erratically: speeding around, feeling rather odd."

"I came off the pills within a fortnight when I realised how ill they were making me feel. I had lost no weight at all and felt dreadful. It took me a good few days to come down. I had a reminder from the

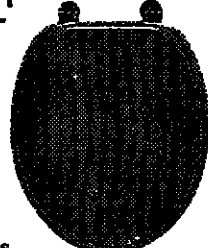
clinic later that month telling me to go back and see them but I would never go back. Looking back it was a dreadful operation, people waiting like a factory production line. They didn't take my blood pressure, inquire about medication or any medical history — the pills could have affected me much worse."

"They seem like the dream answer, regulating your appetite, but actually they just take over your body."

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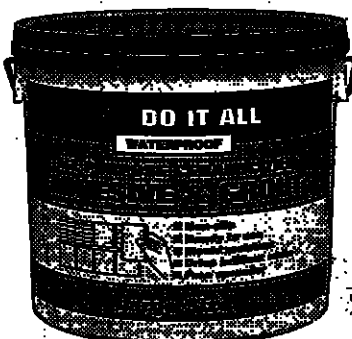
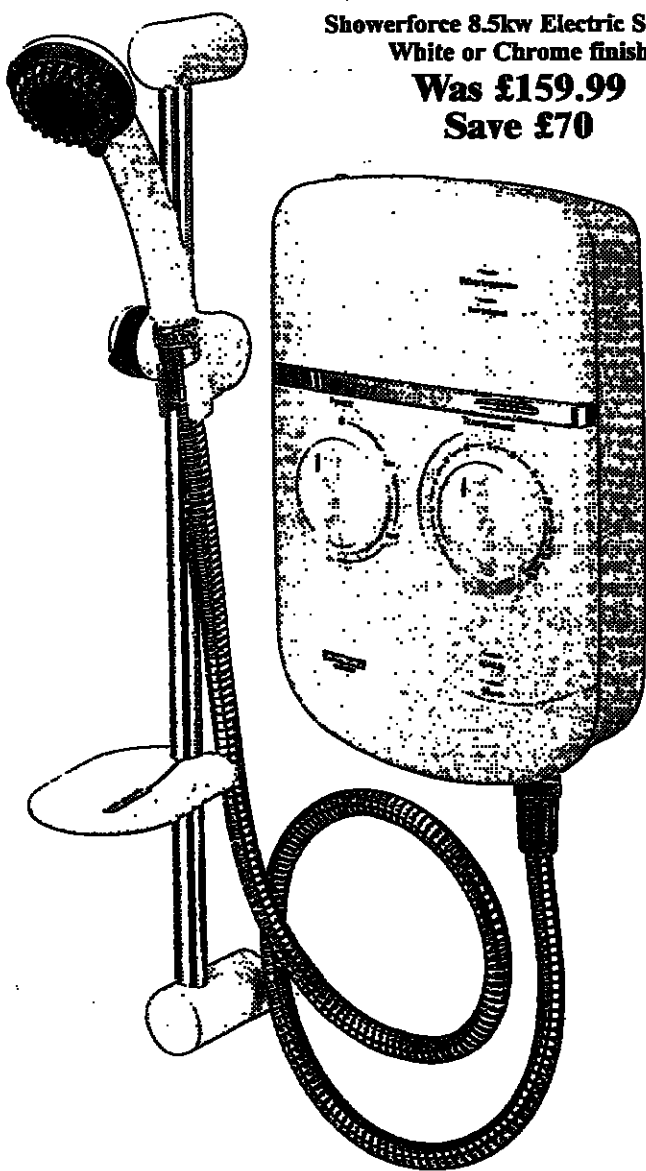
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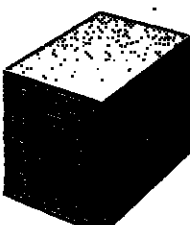


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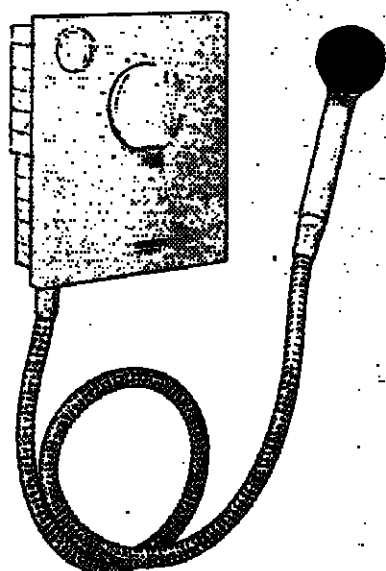
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8 POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Co-operation with US and European allies remains essential and security will rely on Nato defences

Robertson review 'will give Forces a sense of direction'

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A REVIEW of every aspect of the Armed Forces which will give a "sense of direction" for the 21st century was outlined by George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, yesterday.

Despite two reviews carried out by the previous government — Options for Change in 1990 and Frontline First in 1994 — Mr Robertson said it was necessary to look again at

the roles, commitments and capabilities of the Services. He insisted it would not be a cost-cutting exercise but ruled out any increased spending.

"I don't think anyone would realistically expect an increase in defence spending," he told a press conference at the Ministry of Defence. He said the strategic defence review, one of Labour's election manifesto

pledges, would be conducted openly, with outsiders playing a significant part in formulating policy.

Although the Services and civil servants at the MoD would be fully involved, Mr Robertson said he and Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, planned to hold two seminars with outside experts. A panel of such experts is to be set up to act as "a sounding board". The review is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Mr Robertson was reluctant to be drawn on the likely outcome of the review but he declared a number of "bottom lines": co-operation with the United States, European allies and other like-minded nations would remain essential; Britain's security would still rely on the collective defence pro-



George Robertson

George Robertson yesterday. He said the review would be conducted openly, with outsiders playing a significant part in formulating policy.

vided by Nato; and the Government intended to keep strong conventional forces and the Trident nuclear deterrent.

He admitted that the Army was overstretched at present and promised to examine the roles that British troops played around the world. When asked about the future of Britain's armoured division based in Germany, he emphasised the importance of keeping an armoured capability even for peacekeeping operations.

Mr Robertson said Britain should retain its ability to engage in high-intensity warfare, as it did in the Gulf. "It is sometimes only if you have got the capability of fighting a high-intensity war... that you are able then to deal with the

peacekeeping tasks we get involved with," he said. "I was in Bosnia last week and it's some of the heavy armour that we deployed in Bosnia that stopped the fighting from going on in that country and gave the peace process a chance to take place."

He said withdrawing the armoured presence from Germany would have short-term

costs, as well as international implications. "There is an end date for the withdrawal of the RAF from Germany [2002] but there is no decision on the garrison [of 25,000 troops]."

Defence spending had already been reduced in the past five years by about 30 per cent. However, the review would look afresh at all aspects of policy and programmes.

Asked if he planned to rival Denis (now Lord) Healey, who, as Labour Defence Secretary in the 1960s, withdrew British troops east of Suez, Mr Robertson said Lord Healey had made the right decisions at the time. But there were "unique circumstances" today that provided a new dimension to policy-making. Unlike in Lord Healey's day, there were now 17,000 troops in Northern Ireland, he said.

Nicholas Soames, Conservative MP and former Armed Forces Minister, dismissed the review as a waste of time. He said: "Everything under review is under threat from Labour. There is no need for a

defence review because we have already restructured our Armed Forces to face the threats of the post-Cold War. You can't take a peace dividend twice."

Mr Soames suggested that the Government might cancel the Eurofighter project, cut the Army in Germany, reduce armoured regiments and cut back on the equipment procurement programme. He added: "The review will result in smaller Armed Forces, a smaller budget and a less capable operation, and that is greatly against the interests of the United Kingdom and all that we stand for."

Sir John Nott, a former Conservative Defence Secretary who carried out a cost-cutting review in the early 1980s, said his attempts to cut back had been obstructed by the defence chiefs. His proposals to reduce the size of the Royal Navy were thwarted when Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in April 1982 and a naval task force was sent to the South Atlantic.

| DEFENCE CUTS SINCE 1990 | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| | 1990 | 1997 |
| Army manpower | 152,800 | 109,500 |
| Navy | 63,214 | 45,506 |
| RAF | 89,685 | 60,302 |
| Armoured regiments | 18 | 11 |
| Infantry battalions | 55 | 40 |
| Destroyers/frigates | 47 | 35 |
| Nuclear submarines | 22 | 16 |
| Tornado air defence | 128 | 100 |
| Tornado ground attack | 148 | 112 |

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Healey playing draughts with sailors in 1969; Suez withdrawal was the right decision at the time

Short's war on want inspired by her ancestors

By POLLY NEWTON
POLITICAL REPORTER

CLARE SHORT said yesterday that she wanted the world's poor to benefit from the same opportunities that had allowed her poverty-stricken ancestors to build a new life after the Irish potato famine.

Ms Short, in her first major speech since becoming Secretary of State for International Development, said she hoped that international poverty would be eliminated within 30 years.

"I have a picture of my great-great-grandfather who left the west of Ireland in the 1840s to escape the potato famine and came to Birmingham to live," she told an audience at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

"The possibilities of education and personal development transformed the life of my family, from escaping the famine to where we are now — reasonably educated and comfortable people. So I know very well what the poor of the world need, so we can give others the kind of chances that were given to my family."

Ms Short said she hoped to secure more money for her department from the Treasury in two years, once development projects had been prepared. "My aim is that we should eliminate aid and I hope that within 25 to 30 years both the aid programme and my department will be closed down because our basic task has been accomplished."

"A world that has one to five of its people living in abject poverty is certainly not just unstable."

She said that over the course of 18 years in government, the



Short yesterday: hopes to see poverty ended by 2027

Conservatives had reduced the aid budget from 0.51 per cent of gross national product to 0.27 per cent. "We fought the election on a commitment to reinstate the United Nations' target of 0.7 per cent GNP," she said.

"What we want to see is a global society in which people everywhere are entitled to live in peace and security with their families and neighbours. They need fresh air to breathe, clean water to drink, uncontaminated food to eat and livelihoods that allow them to earn their keep and raise healthy, educated children."

"In brief, we want to see a global moral community, where economic endeavour goes hand in hand with accountable government, the rule of law and strong civil society."

Ms Short plans to publish a White Paper on reform of the Government's aid programme by early autumn.

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No less wondrous, despite its name, is the tiny parish church of St James the Less in Little

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Originally painted in the 13th and 14th centuries, they were subsequently painted over and lay undiscovered until time and nature gradually peeled away the layers.

The ecclesiastical buildings of England abound in such treasures.

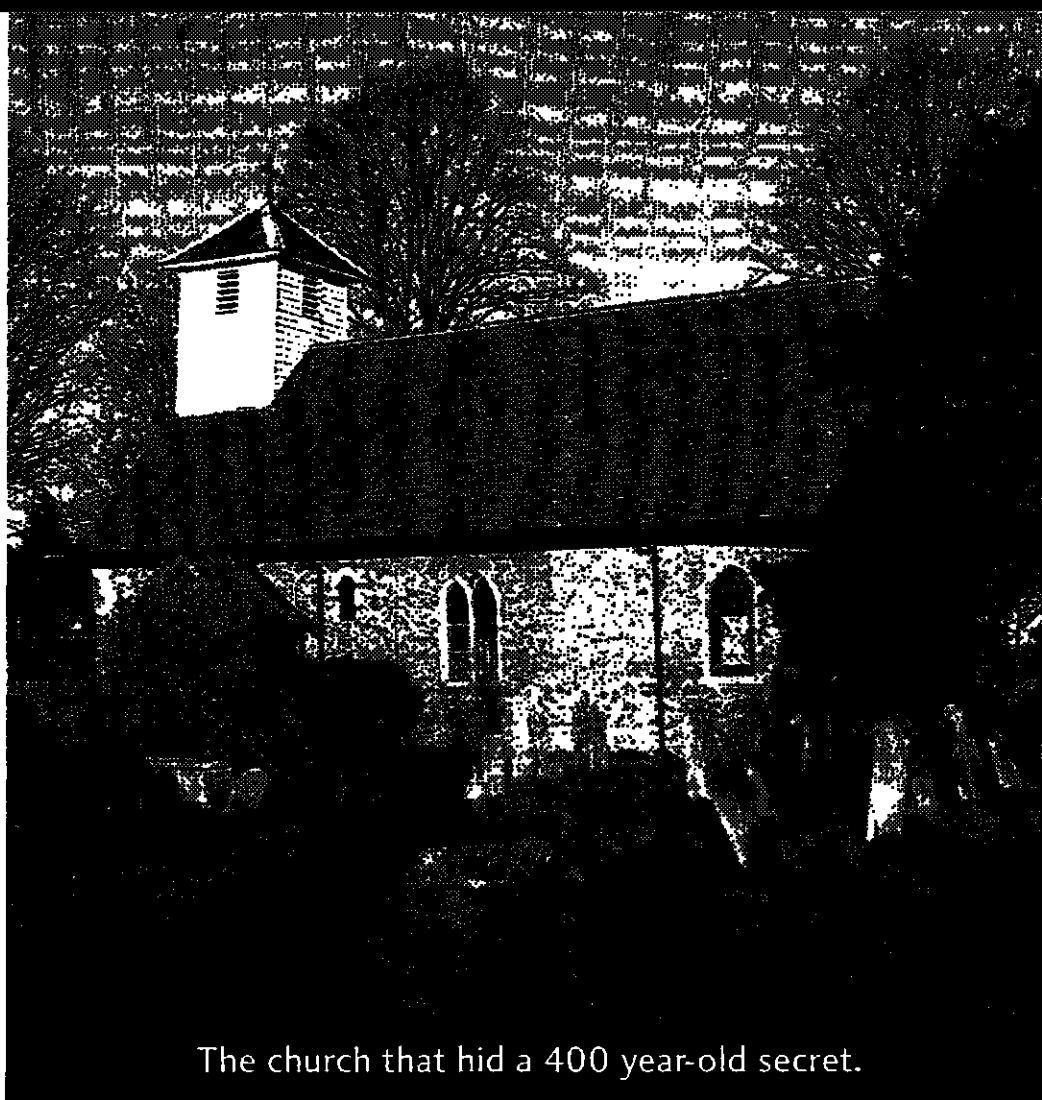
At English Heritage, it is our responsibility to ensure that they

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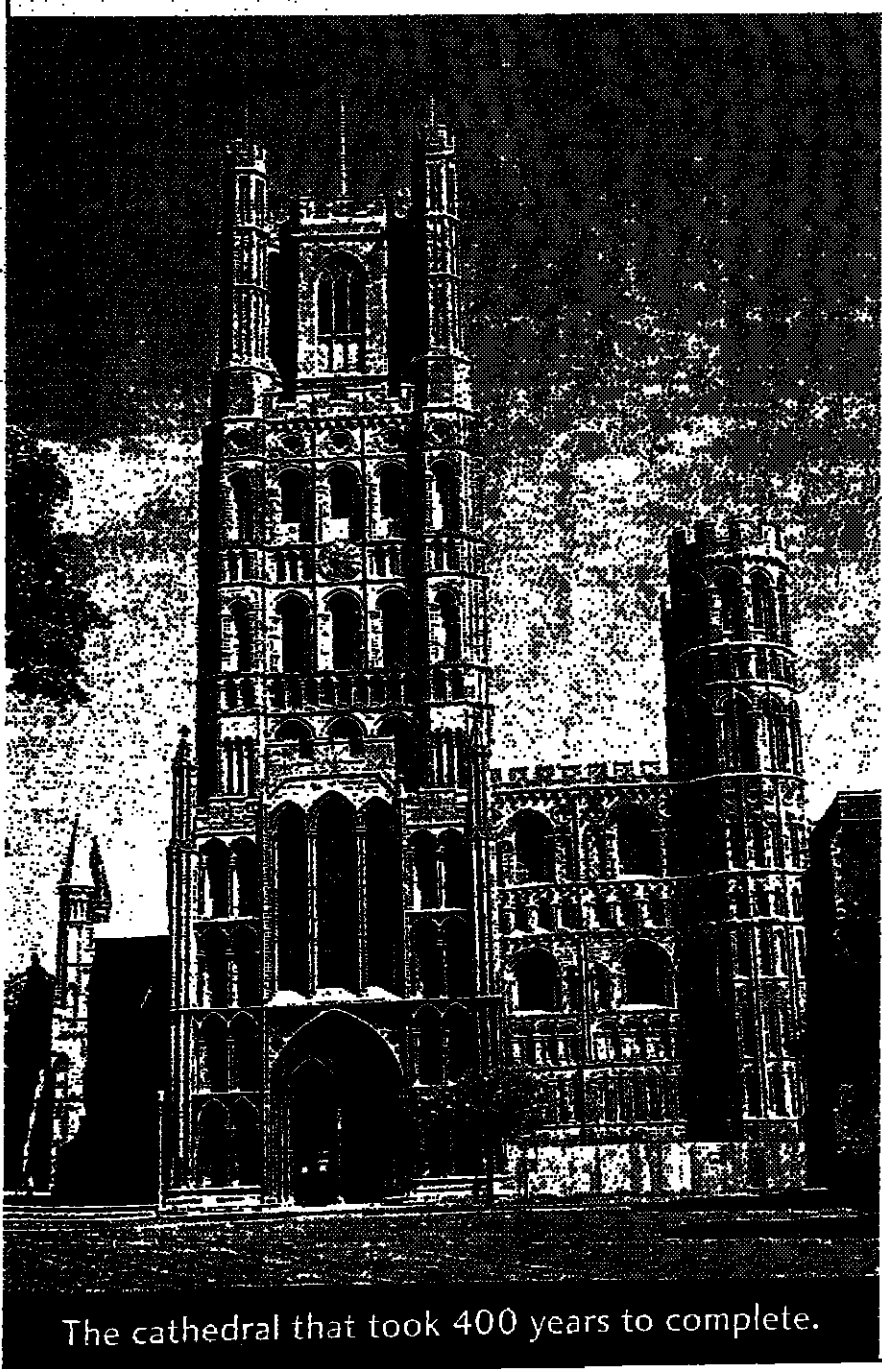
1997 is also the 1400th anniversary of the arrival on our shores of St Augustine, sent from Rome to convert the pagan English to Christianity.

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The church that hid a 400 year-old secret.



The cathedral that took 400 years to complete.

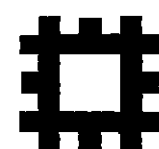
at important sites throughout the country, including candlelit outdoor concerts, poetry recitals, medieval entertainments, and the re-enactment of a Norman wedding.

English Heritage has produced a souvenir map showing 200 buildings of special interest and a schedule of events.

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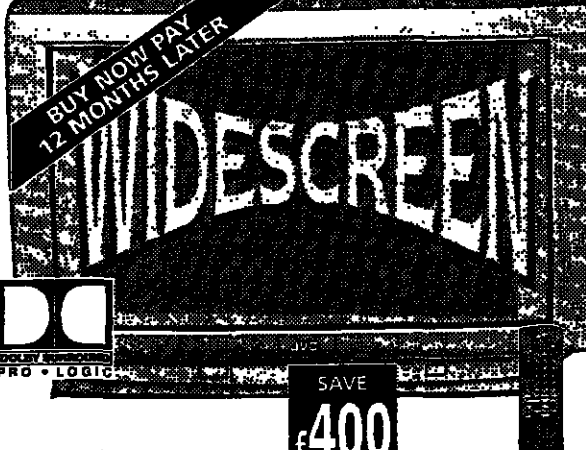


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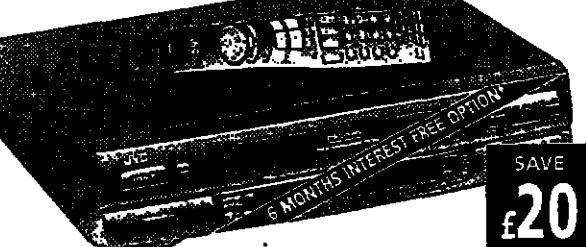
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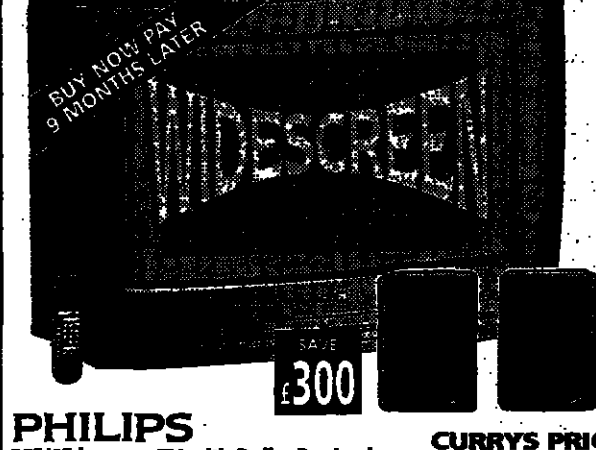
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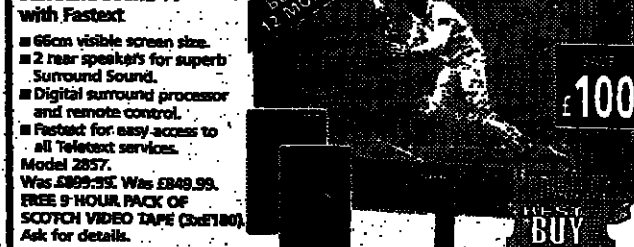
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Jailed nurse report questions NHS code of silence

By RICHARD DUCE

WIDE-RANGING reform of the way health workers are recruited, including a "whistleblower's charter", was urged yesterday by the inquiry into the case of Amanda Jenkinson, a nurse jailed for harming a patient.

The inquiry's report, by Richard Bullock, a solicitor, made 29 recommendations on what he described as "fundamental ethical and practical problems of recruiting in the health service".

Measures called for include clearer guidelines for "whistleblowers" to allow them to report concerns about colleagues in a "blame-free" culture.

It also emphasised that there was a "common misconception that any information given to a doctor by another member of the nursing or medical staff who was a patient was covered by an absolute duty of confidence".

Jenkinson, 37, was sacked from Bassetlaw District General Hospital in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, for allegedly failing to disclose that she had a history of mental illness. In 1996 she was jailed for five years for tampering with a patient's life-support equipment to discredit a colleague on her unit.

The report called for recruitment staff to be better trained and for a designated officer within a hospital or trust to check an applicant's registration with the medical and nursing governing bodies.

It also highlighted a need for NHS staff to undergo a probationary period and for a standard application form to cover the whole health service.

On the issue of confidentiality, the report called for tighter guidelines in identifying potential problems and the need, in the public interest, to impress on staff their responsibility to break medical confidentiality where necessary. Professional health bodies should stress to their members that "it is an offence not to break confidence in appropri-

PROPOSALS

- Probationary period for health service job applicants
- Standard health questionnaires for job applications
- Employers to check CVs through a designated officer
- GPs to confirm applicant capable of job
- Professional bodies to define precise guidelines of "accountability" to members

ate circumstances and to alert the proper authorities to the danger of action by a patient who is a danger either to himself/herself or to their own patients".

The Bullock report recommends that occupational health records be moved with staff from job to job and that they be double-checked by general practitioners.

Mr Bullock said: "The patient's position is paramount. Patients entrust themselves to doctors and nurses, that they will receive full and effective treatment and that ing that those doctors and nurses may have suffered in the past will affect that."

Mr Bullock added that in the case of Jenkinson, Bassetlaw Hospital "undertook every step it could to ensure proper screening" but she was found to have lied about her medical history: "At the end of the day, there will always be someone able to evade systems. We don't want to add to bureaucracy but we do want wider checks."

Jenkinson continues to protest her innocence and claims she has been the subject of a "whitewash" report.

Her brother and sister-in-law attended the press conference held yesterday after the report was published. Jenkinson's brother Rogan, a doctor of archaeology, said they attended because the inquiry was "intertwined" with what had happened to his sister. Dr Jenkinson

disputed claims that his sister was suffering from a psychiatric illness at the time of the incident. His wife Amanda said Jenkinson, from Worksop, was determined to fight the case in the appeal court. She has also lodged a claim for unfair dismissal against Bassetlaw District General Hospital.

The report will go to the NHS Executive and the Department of Health for circulation within the health service and is expected to apply to doctors and other health professionals as well as nurses.

Unison, the health union, gave a cautious welcome to the report and will seek a meeting with the Department of Health. A spokesman said: "We have concerns about basic civil liberties and the area of patient confidentiality. But we do recognise that patients need to be protected as well."



Shakespeare's Britain: drawn in the year of his birth

The £700,000 book that put Britain on the map

By PETER FOSTER

A BOOK of Renaissance maps which show the first detailed picture of the British Isles went on display yesterday, following its purchase for an estimated £700,000 by the British Library.

The collection of more than 70 maps was pasted together by the Flemish map-maker Gerhardus Mercator, for an academic friend who was planning a long European tour in 1570. It was Mercator who first adapted the word "atlas" for a book of maps. His *Atlas of Europe* was rediscovered by chance in 1967, battered and soiled, when a Dutch school teacher on camping holiday spotted it in a Brussels bookshop.

He sold it in 1979 for about £300,000 and it has been largely inaccessible to the public. The British Library has now acquired the work from the Railways Pension Fund with the aid of a £500,000 lottery grant.

Peter Barber, deputy map librarian at the British Li-



Mercator: first to call map-book an "atlas"

brary, said the acquisition filled the largest gap in the library's collection of about 25 million maps: "This will allow scholars to improve their knowledge of how a new European identity began to develop in the sixteenth century."

The atlas includes one of only four surviving examples of Mercator's 1564 wall map of the British Isles, which

represents the first detailed and reasonably accurate representation of the UK's four component parts. It shows an enormous increase in the number of place names compared with earlier maps, with 2,500 names in all and 1,250 for England and Wales alone, including Stratford-upon-Avon in the very year of Shakespeare's birth.

There are some errors. Mercator mistakes Sussex (Sourses) and Surrey (Soursrey) for towns. Previous maps had been based on inaccurate medieval information. Mercator drew on a wide variety of sources, including historic chronicles and travel accounts.

The atlas at the library's exhibition galleries also includes the only surviving copy of Mercator's influential map of Europe, drawn in 1554 and heavily imitated. The library is applying for a grant to make the collection available on electronic media such as CD-Rom.

Leading article, page 21



Up to 600 elephants are culled each year at Kruger National Park to keep numbers at a sustainable level

Lusty males force female elephants to give up the Pill

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PUTTING elephants on the Pill is a mistake, scientists at Kruger National Park in South Africa have been forced to admit. Field trials of the contraceptive have been abandoned after they disrupted the normally tranquil elephant society in the park.

The effect of oestrogen implants given to ten cow elephants was to drive the bull elephants wild. They had the impression that the females were permanently on heat and subjected them to endless and unwanted attention. "The bulls would not leave them alone," Ian Whyte, the park's elephant specialist, told *New Scientist*. "When we tracked them from the air, we would find a cow on her own surrounded by up to eight bulls. That, we feel, is not the way we want to treat elephants."

The idea came from a team from the Institute for Zoo Biology and Wildlife Research in Berlin. In the safety of a wildlife park, elephants reproduce too quickly, causing overcrowding and environmental damage. In Kruger Park, up to 600 have been culled every year to keep numbers at a sustainable level. The contraceptive implant appeared an attractive alternative. Ten elephants, which had recently given birth — chosen because they were the

least likely to be pregnant — were implanted last October with slow-release oestrogen capsules based on those used in human medicine.

Not only were the females constantly bothered, but in some cases they were separated from their young calves by males who wouldn't take no for an answer. This could have had serious effects on the social structure of the elephant groups, made up of females and their young.

Hopes of controlling elephant fertility have not been abandoned, however. In a separate project at the park, 21 cow elephants were vaccinated last October with protein taken from the layer of cells surrounding the ova [eggs] in pigs. This form of "immunocontraception" produces antibodies which prevent the sperm penetrating the elephants' eggs.

Dr Jay Kirkpatrick of ZooMontana, a zoological institute in Billings, Montana, who is collaborating in the study with scientists from the University of Pretoria, believes it will work better than hormonal contraception. He says that ZooMontana abandoned hormones in the 1970s because they were impractical, caused changes in behaviour and had been shown to cause tumours in zoo animals.

Must the cure be a pill?

To move forward you need to take a different view. Which is why the new Audi A6

American human-rights group accuses the RUC over parades

By NICHOLAS WATT
CHIEF IRELAND
CORRESPONDENT

AMERICA'S largest human-rights group provoked fury yesterday when it accused the Royal Ulster Constabulary of violating human rights. In a 100-page report, the New York-based Human Rights Watch / Helsinki blamed the RUC for exacerbating last summer's violence and called for reforms.

Even the RUC's critics in Northern Ireland said that the report, *To Serve Without Favour*, had failed to take account of the unique difficulties faced by the police in tackling loyalist and republican terrorism. The report was published as Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, stepped up her efforts to avoid a repeat of last year's disturbances. She spent the day meeting leaders of the Apprentice Boys in Londonderry, leaders of the Orange Order in Belfast and a group which is campaigning for Protestant civil rights in South Belfast.

She said: "I am listening to people, to understand what their position is." Civil servants were holding their second meeting in a week with Sinn Féin at Stormont.



Martin McGuinness, left, leads the Sinn Féin delegation into their second round of talks at Stormont Castle

A lengthy account of last July's disturbances at Drumcree, near Portadown, Co Armagh, in the human-rights report said: "Police failed to break up illegal protests by loyalists because of the Protestant bias in the force; Bad police judgment fuelled 'mob tactics'. The RUC should have taken steps to restrict the contentious loyalist march. Ken Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, said: "The violence that erupted last summer is in very significant part a product of

a failure of policing and the failure to maintain the rule of law."

However, policing experts said that the RUC faced a mammoth task at Drumcree last year. Violence erupted when the RUC allowed an Orange parade to pass through a nationalist area of Portadown after originally banning it. Sir Hugh Annesley, the then chief constable, reversed his decision at the end of a four-day stand-off after loyalist terrorists threatened to spray police with burning petrol. Sir Hugh

admitted his decision meant that the rule of law was temporarily suspended, but he said that the alternative would have been to fire live rounds at the Orangemen.

Chris Ryder, one of Northern Ireland's leading policing experts, said that the human rights report failed to take account of the difficulties Sir Hugh faced at Drumcree. Mr Ryder, a reformist who is a former member of the Northern Ireland Police Authority, said: "There is no original thinking in this report. There are a lot of naive and idealistic recommendations. They are bringing conventional yardsticks to a most unconventional situation."

The report called for an end to the use of plastic bullets; an end of non-jury Diplock courts; the repeal of emergency legislation; normal policing functions by the RUC throughout Northern Ireland, with protection provided by the Government.

This final point, which failed to mention that RUC officers face the risk of being shot by an IRA sniper every time they enter a republican area, was seized on by Mr Ryder. He said: "This is just naive and is impossible in the light of the risk."

Saturday in
THE
TIMES

THE JOYS
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Weekend

Holiday families need £400 to buy sun protection

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A FAMILY of four would need to spend £400 on sunscreen to obtain adequate protection for a two-week holiday, an expert on ultra-violet radiation control said yesterday.

Skin cancer was now killing 1,500 people a year, Dr Chris Sharp of the National Radiological Protection Board said, and there was an urgent need to stop the public going into the sun without protection.

"Suncream is not as good protection as a hat and clothing, but any exposed skin should be covered with a lot of it and the application should be renewed every hour," he said. "You need to fill the cup of your hand with it just for one application to the top of the body."

A study by Which? magazine named Sainsbury's Suncare Lotion as the best buy. It costs £4.99 for 200 millilitres, enough for just over five applications. Doctors recommend reapplying the lotion every hour. One person spending eight hours a day in the sun for two weeks would need 20 bottles, costing nearly £100.

Dr John Hawk, consultant dermatologist at St Thomas's Hospital, London, said that there was no point in buying anything with a sun protection factor of less than 15. "There is no real advantage in putting on lower-factor creams. It is just a pharmaceutical ruse to obtain money." The best

method of protection was to stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm and to always wear a broad-brimmed hat and close-weave cotton clothing, Dr Hawk said. "There is no such thing as a healthy tan. If the skin turns brown, it shows that it has been damaged."

At the launch of a campaign to warn the public about the danger of sunbathing, the Health Department said that skin cancer was now the second most common form of the disease, with 40,500 cases and 1,500 deaths reported each year. The number has grown by 50 per cent since 1974. Eighty per cent of all skin cancers are related to exposure to the sun.

Katie Aston, the Health Education Authority's campaign director on cancer, said that "machos" sunbathing by men was a worrying development. A third more women than men develop malignant melanoma, but a third more men die of it because they tend to report the condition when it is too advanced for treatment.

"Men are less likely to aspire to a tan and more likely to burn," Ms Aston said. "Women are more used to putting cream on their faces and are therefore much readier to use sun screens." Nearly twice as many men as women in the 35 to 44 age group get burnt.

US cult offers to clone humans for \$200,000

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A RELIGIOUS cult which believes life on earth was created in laboratories by extra-terrestrials is offering to clone human beings for \$200,000 (£123,000).

The Raelian Movement, founded by a Canadian called Claude Vorilhon who lives near Montreal and is known to his followers as Rael, announced last week that he had set up a company to market cloning.

The Bahamas-based company says it will build a laboratory in a country where human cloning is not

banned and will offer its service worldwide to wealthy parents. The sect, which has 35,000 believers, plans to use the technique developed at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh to create the cloned sheep, Dolly.

Mr Vorilhon's company plans to sponsor American laboratories which want to work on human cloning, New Scientist reports.

Human cloning is banned in Britain, although there is disagreement over whether the law explicitly bans the Roslin method.

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Threat to call more women witnesses in Clinton sex case

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AFTER their victory in the United States Supreme Court, lawyers for Paula Jones are hoping to issue subpoenas to various women and Arkansas state troopers next month to buttress her claim of sexual harassment by President Clinton.

Their purpose is to prove that as Governor of Arkansas he had a propensity to act in the way she alleges.

One of the lawyers, Joseph Cammarata, said: "In this case there have been public reports of a pattern of conduct where then Governor Clinton used state troopers at state expense for his own personal enjoyment, in particular for the procurement of women."

One woman reportedly eager to testify is Jennifer Flowers, the former nightclub singer in Little Rock, who claimed to have a 12-year adulterous affair with Mr Clinton. A spokesman said she is looking forward to giving a deposition as a form of vindication for herself and Mrs Jones.

Mr Cammarata said he will press to obtain photographs of Mr Clinton's private parts. According to Mrs Jones, his genital area has distinguishing characteristics that she observed when he allegedly dropped his trousers in a Little Rock hotel room and asked her for oral sex six years ago.

From the start, Mr Clinton has denied any wrongdoing,

but yesterday's legal battle was a harbinger of how tawdry a court case would be.

The Jones legal team was increasing pressure on Mr Clinton to settle out of court. Gilbert Davis, another of her lawyers, said the essential feature of any settlement would have to be a statement redeeming her reputation. An acknowledgement that the President was in the hotel room and that he regretted what happened would be a good start, Mr Davis said.

The two sides were close to a statement three years ago, but talks fell through. In a draft apology proposed by Mrs Jones's lawyers at the time, Mr Clinton would have said he had no recollection of meeting her in the room, but did not challenge her claim that they met there.

He would also say she did not engage in any improper sexual conduct and he regretted any untrue assertions that disparaged her character and good name. There would be no direct comment on his own conduct, but a response by Mrs Jones would have said that she stood by her prior account of the episode.

For now, at least, the President's side was not taking the bait of resuming negotiations. His lawyer, Robert Bennett, said a deal was unlikely because Mr Clinton had done nothing wrong. "We are confident the case will ultimately be

resolved in the President's favour," said Mr Bennett, implying they would question Mrs Jones's motives. She seeks damages of \$700,000 (£430,000).

Only Mrs Jones and Mr Clinton know what really happened in the room, but she has supporting testimony of three witnesses she spoke to that day about Mr Clinton's alleged advances. Mrs Jones, 30, is now married with two young sons and lives in Long Beach, California.

It was inconceivably thoughtless of the Supreme Court to issue its unanimous opinion that the case should proceed while Mr Clinton was in Europe signing Nato's pact with Russia, celebrating the Marshall Plan's fiftieth anniversary and stopping off in London today to meet the Blair Cabinet.

In The Hague yesterday, Mr Clinton refused to discuss the lawsuit but did express concern about the precedent set for future Presidents by the Supreme Court's decision to let the case go forward while he was still in office. The court rejected his arguments that the case would be a significant distraction, hinder his duties and attract a flood of frivolous cases from his foes.

The timing of the nine justices, two of them appointed by Mr Clinton, detracted cruelly from the presidential trip, as if to underscore their verdict that no American is above the law.

The Jones case does not come as a shock to Americans who have voted him into office twice while suspecting him of marital infidelity. Still, a drawn-out trial would damage him politically and tarnish his place in history.

Three other legal clouds hang over the Clintons. One is the suggestion that justice was obstructed by the payment of "hush money" to Webster Hubbell, Mrs Clinton's former law colleague. Another is alleged misuse of power in campaign fundraising. The third is that the Clintons engaged in fraud in the long-running Whitewater saga. All are denied by the First Couple.



Jennifer Flowers, who claimed to have had an affair with Bill Clinton, is eager to testify against him



TONY CHENG/AP

Routed Taliban force driven out of northern city

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN MAZAR-SHARIF AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

TALIBAN fighters were driven from this northern city yesterday after a 15-hour battle, dealing the Islamic militia one of its worst setbacks since it seized Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, in September.

Uzbek troops who last week staged an ostensibly pro-Taliban mutiny against General Abdul Dostum, the opposition warlord based in Mazar-i-Sharif, had turned on their new allies on Tuesday.

Fierce fighting erupted in the city after a Taliban armoured column entered a Shia Muslim district to disarm supporters of another opposition militia, Hezb-i-Wahdat. The Uzbeks, led by General Abdul Malik, attacked the column from the rear and clashes spread as local fighters fired at buildings occupied by the mainly ethnic Pashtun Taliban.

Deafening bursts of machinegun fire ripped through the streets and tank, mortar and rocket explosions shook the city. By noon it was clear that the black-turbaned Taliban force, numbering at least 3,000, had suffered complete defeat at the hands of General Malik's forces and Hezb-i-Wahdat.

Opposition forces in the city meanwhile arrested Muhammad Ghos, the Foreign Minister of the Taliban Government, and Abdul Razzaq, Taliban's northern military commander, a Pakistan-based news service reported.

Early in the day bullets smashed into a United Nations guesthouse where foreign aid workers and journalists had spent the night in a bunker. After a lull for prayers, the gunfire became even more intense. The message of Mazar-i-Sharif is simple: predictions of a peaceful Afghanistan are premature.

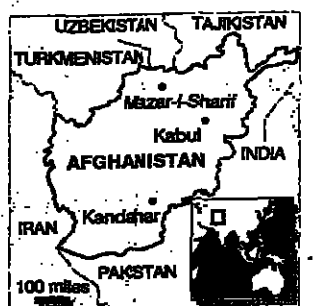
A carpet shop nearby was burning, sending acrid smoke through the guesthouse, nearly forcing an evacuation. But the blaze subsided. Besides, there was nowhere to run.

The elderly guesthouse cook, a bald, stocky man who has seen a good deal of fighting before, stayed in his kitchen until even he could stand no more and retreated to

the bunker. A bullet went through the corrugated-iron gate at the entrance of the guesthouse and drilled a neat hole in the window at the front door. General Malik's forces eventually gained control of the street and Taliban fighters retreated to the mosque, one of the most impressive buildings in Afghanistan. It was restored only a few years ago; now it was at the centre of the war.

Finally there was silence. The street was empty save for a few of General Malik's soldiers prowling with rocket launchers on their shoulders.

The UN asked for, and promptly received, permission from Uzbekistan to evacuate expatriates by road across the



Onus River, 40 miles away. There was also a contingency plan for an evacuation operation from the air.

Word eventually came from the Mazar-i-Sharif authorities, such as there are any: foreigners are safe, do not move. The situation was to be reviewed today, when a dash for the border might be authorised. We have one injured man, a Afghan translator. Shrapnel sliced through a window and through his arm; one of our number has walked to what may turn out to be an empty hospital for help.

This battle will lay the seeds of future battles, as it must according to Afghan ethos. A grudge can be maintained for a century or more: whoever loses this time will come back to restore honour, and smash some more of this city and, along with it, any hope that the Taliban advance could bring peace — even a peace under the Islamic army's ultra-orthodox code — to the country.

Earhart follower makes it home

night flight from Hawaii to Oakland was the last leg of her journey round the world at its widest point, the equator. She was greeted by cheering crowds. Her predecessor died when her twin-engine Lockheed Electra plunged into the Pacific 60 years ago.

Ms Finch's 2,400-mile

Earhart follower makes it home

night flight from Hawaii to Oakland was the last leg of her journey round the world at its widest point, the equator. She was greeted by cheering crowds. Her predecessor died when her twin-engine Lockheed Electra plunged into the Pacific 60 years ago.

Ms Finch's 2,400-mile solo by Ms Finch, 46, made a pass over Oakland Airport before touching down on time at 9.30am, its arrival followed by millions of schoolchildren on television and via an Internet link to the cockpit.

Ms Finch, in her 'leaky, loud and cramped' aircraft, touched down in 20 countries on six continents, logging 26,000 miles in ten weeks. She used three gallons of engine oil.

Rebels face suspension by Commonwealth

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

WITH Nigerian troops poised to crush the Sierra Leone coup, Britain has hinted that it will seek the country's suspension from the Commonwealth unless civilian rule is restored quickly.

The military coup is a first test of Labour's human rights policy, but presents Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, with a dilemma. The main force

opposing Major Johnny Koroma, the rebel leader, is the Nigerian-led West African force overseeing the peace process in neighbouring Liberia, but Britain wants to increase sanctions against General Sani Abacha's regime in Nigeria.

London is likely to try to obtain a recommendation for Sierra Leone's suspension at the July meeting of the Commonwealth ministerial action group, set

up to deal with military regimes in Nigeria, The Gambia and Sierra Leone. The Commonwealth may press at its summit in Edinburgh this autumn for sanctions, and Sierra Leone's suspension, Nigeria said yesterday that it was trying to resolve the coup peacefully. In the meantime, Nigerian troop reinforcements have arrived by boat in Freetown.

Leading article, page 21

THE SUNDAY TIMES

ONE OF THESE THREE BABIES WILL GET CANCER...

But he or she does not have to die. New means of identifying and treating cancer could save that life. A special issue of The Sunday Times Magazine this weekend investigates the advances in research and the key question: can we win the war against cancer in the lifetime of these babies?

THE SUNDAY TIMES / THE SUNDAY PAPERS

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Texas twisters leave at least 29 people dead

Tiny town is flattened as funnel winds fling trees, telegraph poles, animals and lorries high in the air

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

RESCUE teams picked through the flattened remains of homes and businesses yesterday after a swarm of tornadoes raked through central Texas, killing at least 29, injuring dozens more and leaving one entire neighbourhood "just a flat, vacant field".

Striking with terrifying force, the worst tornado in Texas for ten years struck late on Tuesday in the tiny town of Jarrell, 40 miles north of Austin, blasting a mile-long path of destruction that whipped cars and livestock into the air and reduced houses to piles of debris on their concrete bases. Hundreds in Jarrell were homeless yesterday, contemplating the ruins of about 70 houses and the sight of hearses shuttling to and from a mortuary set up in the local school hall.

"I've never seen a tornado before in my life... and I don't care to see one again"

The town of less than 1,000, last devastated by tornadoes in 1989, faced a mounting toll as the sheriff announced that 23 people were missing and 27 had been confirmed as dead.

Nowhere in the 100-mile stretch of hill country between Austin and Waco was safe as roaring funnel clouds from a worsening thunderstorm hit the ground amid flash floods and golfball-sized hail at 4pm.

Two fatalities were blamed on the storms in Austin, where homes collapsed and a swollen creek swept a man to his death. North of the city, in Cedar Park, eight people were injured and one was believed to have been killed by a separate tornado that ripped the roof of a supermarket and wreaked havoc in the car park.

The tornado "looked about two inches tall at first", Ray Westphal said. "Then it started taking up the entire horizon. As it got closer, everyone panicked. Building tops were flying around. It was picking cars right up into the air, flinging them everywhere."

At an artificial yachting basin near Waco, 80 boats and a marina were destroyed. Along Interstate 35, the region's north-south artery, drivers left their cars and cowered under bridges, bewildered as the towering twisters approached and dazed once they had passed. "I've never seen a tornado before in my life," one driver told a local news station. "And I don't really care to see one again."

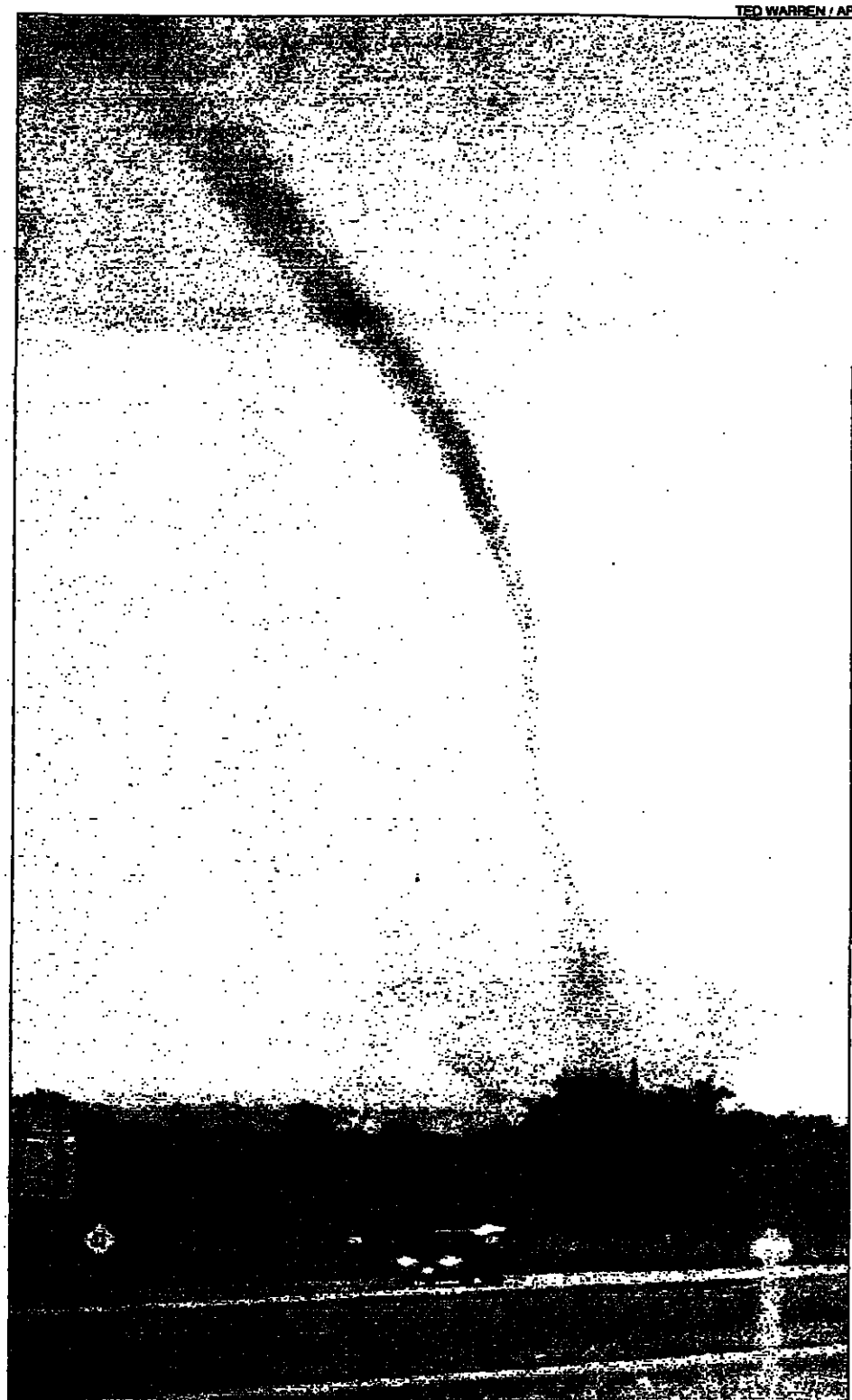
In an eerie echo of last year's hit film, *Twister*, dead cows were left lying in the fields around Double Creeks Estate, Jarrell's worst-hit neighbourhood. Amateur video of the tornado that destroyed the estate captured its scale and ferocity. Dwarfing buildings in its path, the tornado hurled up a spiralling cloud of debris and, according to local meteorologists, generated winds of up to 280mph at its vortex, making it a force 4 tornado out of a maximum of 5. "It was like a big vacuum that sucked everything up," said Mike Cox, the spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety, who inspected the area on Tuesday night.

At the south of the "tornado belt", central Texas is no stranger to destruction. Force 5 tornadoes killed 114 at Goliad in 1902 and left the same number dead in Waco in 1953. Until Tuesday, the state's worst tornado in recent years hit Saragosa in 1987, killing 30 and injuring 162.

Yesterday priests and counsellors converged on Jarrell to offer solace to a community in which every survivor is thought to have known at least one of the dead. The town was scarred badly enough eight years ago, when a tornado killed two and razed 35 homes.

"This is worse," said Janene Brock, a resident. "It's going to be awful. They're going to have to bury so many people."

As coroner's staff used dental records to identify the



One of the funnel clouds touches down north of Jarrell in Texas yesterday. At least 29 people have died in the storms and more than 20 others are still missing

victims, the Red Cross issued a national appeal for the "millions of dollars" it would cost to repair the damage and support Jarrell's homeless.

A helicopter sent up yesterday morning by the Department of Public Safety to assess the destruction reported worse damage to property and farmland than initially thought.

The Double Creeks estate lay in a swath of flattened trees, upended telegraph poles and dead animals. Cheri Green, a spokeswoman for the department, said the band of destruction was about four miles long and up to half a mile wide.

An army of TV crews has descended on the town. George Bush, the Governor

and son of the former President, toured the area amid expectations that he would declare a local state of emergency. Those with full house insurance received prompt assistance from insurers. "We'll be cutting cheques all day so folks can pay for hotel lodging and food," one spokeswoman said.



A pick-up truck negotiates the hazardous conditions on Interstate 35, between Round Rock and Georgetown. Many drivers were forced to abandon their vehicles

Living with the terrors of America's tornado alley

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

TORNADOS are short-lived but violent, lasting on average only a few minutes but capable of huge destruction.

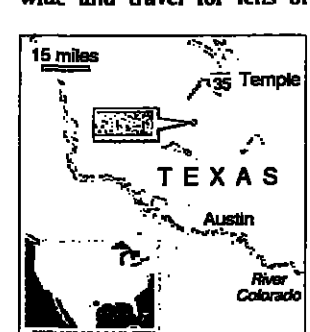
They form from the swiftly rising columns of air that exist beneath thunderclouds. These updrafts supply the warm, humid air that fuels the thunderstorm.

Sometimes, for reasons that remain obscure, the updrafts start to spin — always anti-clockwise in the Northern hemisphere. This spin often appears at the edge of the updraft, where there is a boundary between the warm air flowing upwards and cold air flowing downwards mixed with rain and hail.

Why some updrafts form twisters and others do not remains a mystery. The vortex grows downwards from the cloud, and becomes a tornado only when it reaches the ground. Until then, it is invisible because it is merely a whirling wind. However, it quickly becomes visible as it sucks up dust, dirt and solid objects from the ground. The air pressure at the centre of the tornado is very low, and air rushing in

creates winds with speeds of up to 250mph.

An average tornado is about 400 to 500ft wide, and travels about four or five miles along the ground at 20 to 50mph. Exceptionally, a tornado may be up to a mile wide and travel for tens of



miles. The record is held by a tornado that covered 219 miles on March 18, 1925, the Great Tri-State Tornado which killed 689 people in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana.

The last country of the Midwest, stretching through Texas to Oklahoma and Kansas, is tornado alley. Here warm, moist air moving up from the Gulf of Mexico meets cold air from the north-

west. Some days there may be 20 or more. In a typical year, more than 1,000 tornadoes are reported; in June 1992 there were 399.

The power of tornadoes is awe-inspiring. In January 1974 a tornado in McComb, Missouri, tossed three school buses over an 8ft-high embankment and into woods. Fortunately, they were empty at the time.

In May 1970 a tornado in Lubbock, Texas, moved an empty 10-tonne fertiliser tank more than half a mile. Nobody knows whether it was airborne all the way or tumbled end over end.

The study of debris can provide useful information about tornadoes. The Tornado Debris project at the University of Oklahoma has been analysing just what becomes of things whiskered into the air. In an attempt to understand the dynamics of the process, after a tornado in Oklahoma on May 7, 1995, they found a man's jacket 20 miles away, and a golf-course pin 43 miles from the green from which it had been sucked. A cancelled cheque was carried 125 miles by the same tornado.

CIA coup-makers had 58 on hit list

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

NEW details have emerged of an American plot in the early 1950s to overthrow the elected Government of Guatemala.

According to newly declassified CIA documents, the coup — codenamed Operation Success — involved the training of assassins to kill at least 58 political leaders and a "psychological war" of death threats, including phone calls "preferably between Sam and Sam".

The murders were never carried out, but the coup went off smoothly. Undermined by the campaign, the left-wing Government of Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown in June 1954 by military officers. Arbenz fled to Mexico. US involvement has been well documented. Elected in 1950, Arbenz's radical land reform programme had angered American allies in

the region and multinational fruit companies.

But the new documents, part of an official CIA history of the coup, disclose that the "disposal list" of people to be assassinated was still being considered until the day Arbenz resigned. The assassination plans were discussed in detail at the highest levels of the CIA and the State Department, the records show.

The documents also cast new light on the CIA's campaign of sabotage and black propaganda against Arbenz, and provide details of the agency's efforts to recruit Guatemalan military officers. The 1,400 pages of documents are estimated to be only 1 per cent of the CIA's files on the coup. Planning began in 1952 after the CIA was approached by Anastasio Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator, who was concerned by the effect of pressure for social reforms in his own country.

The coup became a landmark in Latin America, cementing the CIA's influence with repressive military regimes in the region. The coup was one of the causes of a civil war in Guatemala that continued until last year, with an estimated toll of 100,000 civilian dead. Regionally, the coup also gave birth to a more radical left-wing movement that took up arms against social injustice in other countries.

Among those most affected by the events of that summer was the 26-year-old Argentine Communist, Che Guevara, who was visiting Guatemala after being attracted by its left-wing experiment in democracy.

"A terrible cold shower has fallen over the Guatemalan people," Guevara wrote before fleeing to Mexico where he joined the exiled Cuban opposition leader, Fidel Castro, as he was planning a guerrilla war in his country.

Trigger-happy US drivers add to increasing danger of road rage

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

ROAD rage is at record levels in the United States. Research shows that American drivers are as likely to carry spare bullets in their vehicles as spare tyres.

According to a study published in New York today by the Automobile Association of America (AAA), "aggressive driving incidents" have risen by 51 per cent since 1990. The association's definition of such incidents is admirably blunt: "those in which an angry or impatient driver tries to injure or kill another driver after a traffic dispute". In all, 218

people have been killed over five years and 12,610 injured.

"What used to be just two people screaming at each other is now one person losing it and pulling the trigger," Lou Mizell, who led the AAA's study, says. In the cases studied, 37 per cent of offenders used firearms against other drivers, 35 per cent used their cars as battering rams, and 28 per cent used an assortment of other weapons and projectiles. They included knives, car jacks and tins of food plucked from shopping bags. The AAA's profile of the

typical "lane ranger" is that of a male aged from 18 to 26. "relatively poorly educated, who has a criminal record, history of violence and drug or alcohol problems". About 4 per cent are female; when women attack other drivers, two thirds of them use their own cars as weapons.

The causes of American road rage are not hard to identify. Seventy per cent of urban freeways are clogged during rush hour and metropolitan drivers spend more than 40 hours a year stuck in traffic jams.

24 Paraguay police car cheats sacked

PRESIDENT Wasmosy of Paraguay ordered the arrest yesterday of 24 police chiefs after they were accused of involvement in smuggling stolen cars from Brazil (Gabriella Gamini writes).

Those dismissed were Mario Sapirza, head of the police, six regional commanders and 17 departmental chiefs. A diplomat in Asunción said: "It has left the force totally discredited."

The scandal was triggered by photographs, published this week in the newspaper *Noticias*, showing the officers making deals with smugglers.



A FRIDGE with a 16-valve engine

Palestinian death threat extended to Israel's Arabs

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Palestinian Authority yesterday issued a warning that the death penalty recently imposed on all Arabs under its jurisdiction selling land to Jews would be extended to cover nearly one million Arab citizens of Israel as well.

The threat was issued by Freith Abu Meidein, the Justice Minister, and raised the prospect of death or kidnap squads being sent to dispense vigilante-style justice to suspected Palestinian land dealers living in Israel or abroad.

Palestinian security agents are suspected of killing two Palestinian land agents whose bullet-ridden bodies were dumped in the self-rule city of Ramallah and of murdering another who has disappeared. About 12 others, recently arrested by Palestinian forces, are in custody facing execution by firing squad if convicted by the rudimentary Palestinian legal system.

Earlier this week a badly wounded land dealer suspected of selling property to Jewish settlers was taken to hospital in the West Bank city of Hebron after being severely

tortured by Palestinian police. His partner in a local land firm was reported to have escaped to Jordan.

"We advise those who carry the Israeli identity cards that, if they believe that they have become Israeli citizens, then they are mistaken," Abu Meidein, a close associate of Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, said. "The Palestinian justice system will apply to them, no matter where they are, and they will be brought to justice in one way or another."

The minister went on to announce that the authority would soon pass a law imposing the death penalty for the

sale of Palestinian land within the state of Israel as well. He said such a law would be upheld by the United Nations General Assembly decision in 1948 declaring that Palestinian refugees must be allowed to return to their homes.

Even before the latest extension of the death penalty for Arabs selling property to Jews, the Israeli Government had branded the legislation "racist" and vowed to bring it before the UN Committee on Human Rights. In the United States, senior politicians have begun steps to block American aid to the Palestinians if the edict is not withdrawn.

The Palestinian Authority,

which operates in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has no jurisdiction over Palestinians with Israeli identity cards. Binyamin Netanyahu, the right-wing Prime Minister of Israel, has already expressed fury and disgust over the new law. Mr Arafat claims that it is merely the revival of capital punishment initially imposed under Jordanian rule of the West Bank.

The capital punishment decree has been backed by calls from leading Muslim clerics for the land dealers to be treated as "infidels" and refused burial in Muslim cemeteries. It took the family of one suspect killed by a Palestinian hit squad nearly two weeks to find somewhere to bury him.

Israel has nearly one million Arab citizens, out of a population of more than 5.6 million people. In disputed Jerusalem, where the power of the Palestinian Authority has not been extended, about 180,000 Palestinians have Israeli identity cards, but most kept their Jordanian citizenship after Israel captured the eastern part of the city in 1967.

Rabin curse conviction

Jerusalem: An extreme right-winger who put an ancient Jewish curse on Yitzhak Rabin, the former Labour Prime Minister, a month before his assassination in November 1995, was yesterday convicted in an Israeli court of violating the Preven-

tion of Terrorism Act (Christopher Walker writes). Legal sources said they believed the conviction was the first under the Act for the use of the *pulsa denura*. The Justice Ministry said Avigdor Eskin could receive a maximum jail term of six years next week.



Protesters begin their demonstration in Kinshasa yesterday. Some were later beaten.

Kabila's troops crack down on protesters in Kinshasa

FROM MATTHEW TOSTEVIN IN KINSHASA

SOLDIERS firing in the air broke up a banned opposition march in Kinshasa yesterday, beating and arresting protesters who had been denouncing the presence of Rwandans among the forces of Laurent Kabila, the self-declared President.

Several thousand supporters of the veteran opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, excluded from the new Kabila Government, took part in the march on the eve of Mr Kabila's inauguration as President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the renamed Zaire.

"It's dictatorship, but it's even worse now because the oppressors are foreigners," one marcher said after troops broke up the protest.

Soldiers from Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire allowed the marchers to cover a few miles before blocking their route. Earlier, thousands of residents lined the streets, cheered the marchers.

"Kabila should have a chance, but we do not want the Rwandans," one student said. "They have got to go." She was among hundreds of

students blocked from joining the march by soldiers in the central Higher Institute of Commerce, once a hotbed of opposition to the ousted former President Mobutu.

"We are here to bring order, that is all," one army commander said.

Soldiers, mainly ethnic Tutsis, broke up the march as it headed for Mr Tshisekedi's home district of Limete. They arrested some marchers and briefly detained journalists, confiscating their film. Mr Kabila was in the southern mining capital of Lubumbashi yesterday.

Predictable election in Indonesia

Jakarta: Indonesians go to the polls today knowing that any upset is out of the question. The only electoral uncertainty is how close the Government will get to its projection of 70.02 per cent of the vote.

That the Government can predict its likely support to two decimal places reveals much about democracy in the country. The 250-plus deaths make this the most violent campaign in 31 years.

Shipowner killed

Pirates: Three gunmen killed Constantinos Peratikos, a Greek shipowner whose family-run holdings had come under terrorist threats after closing a big shipyard two years ago. (AP)

Fish row fines

Ottawa: The salmon fishing dispute between Canada and Washington worsened when Canada, ignoring US pleas, fined three American fishing boats for violating entry regulations in Canadian waters.

Pilot missing

New York: The woman pilot of a US Air Force A10 Thunderbolt was reported missing after her plane crashed at a training range in Arizona. No trace was found of the body of Captain Amy Lynn Svoboda.

Khatami plea

Cairo: Muhammad Khatami, Iran's President-elect, said in an article published in the London-based *Al-Hayat* that the Muslim world should stop antagonising the West and instead understand it. (AP)

Unwanted births

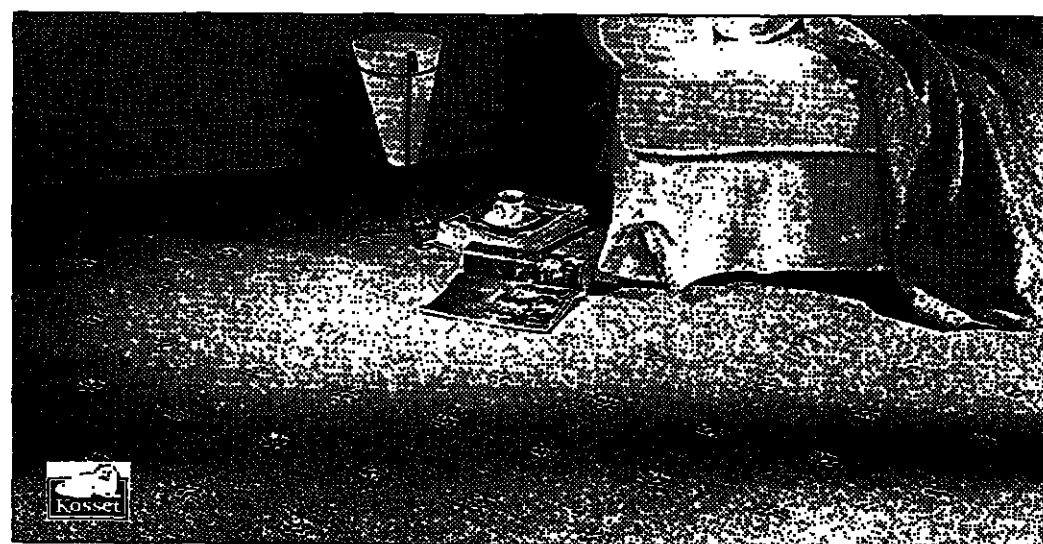
Paris: About 83 million pregnancies each year are unwanted, a United Nations population report said. It blamed cultural, family and political factors for impeding family planning. (AFP)

Spin mandarins

Hong Kong: Beijing has issued instructions to all Chinese newspapers that news about Hong Kong must be positive and derived exclusively from government sources. *Ming Pao* reported.

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CHANGING TIMES



Frances Shand-Kydd: "fascinating life story"

Growing up and keeping mum

Revelations by the Princess of Wales's mother raise issues of loyalty. Janine di Giovanni asks: is there nothing sacred in this confessional age?

Why do they do it? This week's revelations in *Hello!* by Frances Shand-Kydd, mother of Diana, Princess of Wales, add another dimension to the confessional chronicles to which we all seem to be subjected. Shand-Kydd, "telling her fascinating life story", has allegedly infuriated her daughter, who was not happy with her mother's gushing. Not only did Shand-Kydd voice her opinion on her daughter's marriage to the Prince of Wales, her interview on *Panorama* and her bulimia, she also added her two pennyworth about Diana's now defunct title, Her Royal Highness. The Princess is not happy, presumably because she wants to be free to tell us all this herself, with much bawling of eyelashes. At any rate, Shand-Kydd's interview threw more light on the issue of parent-and-child loyalty. Now it is a mother dishing her own daughter.

Is nothing sacred any more? I am drawn back to the debate over Kathryn Harrison, author of *The Kiss*, which has just reached number seven on *The New York Times* bestseller list (which means big, big money). I have a personal interest in Harrison because I was at school with her, not just any school, but a select, graduate writing programme in America that taught us all how to gush.

There were about 30 of us in my year, in the middle of a cornfield, in the middle of America. We were at the oldest, most prestigious and highest-profile writing workshop in the country and most of the writers took themselves very seriously. If one believed the publicity, we were the brightest and the best. Our fiction and poetry manuscripts had been fished out from slush piles of thousands. Some of the more pompous believed that some higher hand had reached down and plucked them to be the next John Irving or Raymond Carver, all of whom had roamed the hallowed, faintly antiseptic halls of the Writers' Workshop.

It is now end of term in Iowa City, the time of year when hot-shot agents and editors from Manhattan fly in and inspect the hopeful writers like prize racehorses. Perhaps even



Frances Shand-Kydd infuriated the Princess of Wales with her opinions on the Princess's marriage, her bulimia and loss of the title Her Royal Highness

now, some innocent is sitting in a lecture or hiding in a corner at a drinks party given for some prestigious editor or some powerful agent. But they are not thinking, as we thought a decade ago, if I try really, really hard, maybe I can be Raymond Carver and write beautiful, spare prose. No, now they are thinking, if I conjure up my past and reach into all the muck and slime of memory and describe terrible things that happened to me, maybe I can be the next Kathryn Harrison.

Harrison was a classmate of mine at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the mid-1980s. It was shortly after she ended her affair with her father, the subject matter of which is graphically recorded in *The Kiss*. Because I was a fiction writer and she was a poet, we did not share workshops.

However, her soon-to-be husband Colin, now a senior editor at *Harpers Magazine* in America and the author of several well-received novels, sat next to me. Like me, he was young, and fresh out of university. The others were older, slicker and more sophisticated: they had come from big jobs in Los Angeles and New York, and had agents and "deals".

Our workshop leader — who was supposed to keep the savage attacks at bay, but in fact encouraged them with glee — was the legendary *Esquire* fiction editor Rust Hills, whose big advice to us was: write what you know.

Two years later, I abandoned fiction writing for jour-

hood in east Texas: there is Naomi Wolf's embarrassing *Promiscuities* about her early coming of age in San Francisco (dressed up as a feminine treatise, but a memoir, and a self-indulgent one at that). There is *Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy, which describes a gruelling childhood battle with cancer of the jaw, and there is the weird *A Match to the Heart: One Woman's Story of Being Struck by Lightning* by Gretel Ehrlich.

The one subject no one mentioned concerning *The Kiss* was betrayal, and the nature of the father-daughter relationship. I was reminded of this when I watched Melissa Bell loyally

trudge after her father, Martin, on the campaign trail, or Cosima von Bulow, who lost out on an inheritance because she was the only one of his children to stick by Claus. How did Harrison justify the damage that this book would cause her father? Perhaps it was the ultimate revenge, or perhaps it was simply a way of destroying his life the way she perceived that he destroyed hers. Obviously, Harrison's book, which is beautifully crafted, acted as some form of therapy, but one wonders if she might have done that in her diaries and with her analyst.

I say this as someone who is now struggling to write a memoir of my own father, who — luckily for me, but boringly for the reader — did not seduce me. However, it is still not easy: it is painful and uncomfortable to dredge up childhood hurts and fears, and worse, I wonder as I write them if I am completely accurate. Suppose what my five-year-old mind sees as the absolute truth, in fact, was not? And at what point does something remain silent?

All of them were furious that I had exposed something

When an extract was published in this paper, I received three phone calls from three members of my family and one from an ex-boyfriend, and all of them were furious that I had exposed something — however complimentary, however moving — about a very private matter.

It was inevitable that it would happen, but last month, an American reporter unearthed Harrison's father, a retired Protestant minister living in the South. His take on *The Kiss*? "You say that Kathryn has said that she had an affair with me? I guess if people want to believe that, golly." When asked if he had a sexual relationship, he replied that "the girl writes fiction". Was he telling the truth? Is she telling the truth? It doesn't matter. *The Kiss* is already a success.

Elisa Segrave, a talented British writer who published *Diary of a Breast* in 1995 about her heartbreaking, yet often hilarious encounters with breast cancer, has published her first novel, *Ten Men*. Segrave is English so not of the American tell-all mode, but she still admits that *Ten Men* is a memoir in disguise.

In many ways, her family life, was as tragic as Harrison's. "Some of what I had written about in the book, particularly about my father and two of my brothers, is very dark," she says. "My father died of cirrhosis of the liver, and one brother drowned, aged five. My second brother declined to drink and drugs while a teenager. He died on his 24th birthday."

Segrave did find it painful to dredge up the memories, but she did not really think about her surviving family. "It might have upset my mother, but she has Alzheimer's," she says. "My 15-year-old daughter has accepted it, although she made me take out one passage in the book, and has asked me not to make my next book so auto-

biographical." She pauses. "Once you get over the initial embarrassment of writing about yourself ... it's very liberating."

The cult of the memoir. The temptation to spill one's guts. It was one thing for wacky novelists and poets to do it, but Frances Shand-Kydd? Is it liberating? Painful? Shameful? Or is it, as Kathryn Harrison's father suggested, simply "weird"?

Years of hard labour end in the dole queue

New Labour researchers are now jobless, says Jesse Armstrong

IT IS not just former Tory MPs buried in the Labour landslide who are facing redundancy. Political workers from both parties are suddenly finding themselves in the job market.

Labour workers are discovering that there is no cosy gravy train that leads from party office into government. Many of the nearly 200 researchers, assistants and secretaries to former Shadow Ministers, like myself, face the irony that a Labour victory has tipped us onto the dole queue.

If you are a policy expert who can hold your own with specialist civil servants, or an assistant with spin-doctoring talents, there are posts available as special advisers and aides. But most young Labour researchers will be moving on.

There is, of course, huge pleasure for researchers when their bosses take up government posts. My former employer, Doug Henderson, became the new Minister for Europe. But mixed with the pleasure of his triumph, there is a little regret. For as our bosses attain power, we lose it.

The secretary of a former Shadow Cabinet Member says ruefully: "I feel like I've lost all my power." The phones that once never stopped ringing are silent now as he assumes real power and his ministerial private office takes over.

Down the corridor from my office, a room is full of young people who used to work 12-hour days for their boss, another new Cabinet Minister. Now they sit among cardboard boxes, reading the papers, waiting to hear who will be following him into office and who

won't. Once I was intimately involved with my employer's political career, now I follow it mostly on television and radio — I read of his appointment on Ceefax. In the days following the election, I became a news junkie, watching every TV bulletin with the sound down so I could listen to the radio, too.

Watching a politician you have served take up the reins of power makes you feel simultaneously like a proud parent and a spurned lover.

Many of the Labour Party workers pushed out of the political nest by civil servants have already secured post-election work. Think-tanks, lobbyists, PR companies

and many TV and radio companies are interested in bright young people with a sound knowledge of the Labour Party. Some researchers chose to depart before the election was called. Cutting ties was hard for them — the buzz of the election meant that one I know used to work a long day as a researcher at a TV production company and then spend a night on the phones as a volunteer.

OTHER workers were seconded from firms such as Andersen Consulting and Coopers & Lybrand and can now return after their political fix. Yet others will find work with ambitious backbenchers among the huge intake of Labour MPs.

I decided before the election that when it was over I would leave politics for a while. But having to leave a job because your boss has become a Minister must be one of the most satisfying reasons to seek a new career.

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Why Scots Tories may go it alone

Rifkind is right to rethink party dogma, says Magnus Linklater

Rifkind's First Law of Politics may not be the most original concept of our time, but it does have a comforting ring to it, particularly for a party which he describes, rather unflatteringly, as "an extra-parliamentary rump". The Law, as set out by Mr Rifkind, says: "What goes down, must come up." His Tory colleagues in Scotland will be greatly relieved: it's the first good news they've heard for 30 days.

Perhaps more important is the way the former Foreign Secretary sees it happening. North of the border, where there are no Tory MPs any longer, the only evidence of returning life has been the muffled sound of complaint, internal dissent and bitter recrimination. That is not wholly surprising. When defeat has been so massive, it takes time to think coherently about what has just happened, let alone to work out a counter-strategy. It is a political form of post-traumatic stress disorder, deserving sympathy rather than condemnation. Sooner or later, however, someone needs to come along and show the way forward, rather like the psychologist William Rivers in Pat Barker's First World War trilogy, steering his shell-shocked patients towards eventual recovery.

Writing in *The Scotsman* yesterday, Mr Rifkind set out a plan for the wholesale makeover of the Tory party in Scotland. It was not enough, he said, to be an Opposition simply waiting for the political pendulum to swing back. The Tories must reinvent themselves, become a modern, reformed party in tune with a new middle class, re-establish its credentials with the electorate, and start winning people over while remaining true to its principles. It must be "unmistakably Scottish" and "unashamedly Unionist". It needs new blood: it needs an open and accountable hierarchy; it needs a "more explicit Scottish political identity".

Above all, it needs to redefine its whole attitude to devolution, which means being a party of innovation rather than reaction. This is a fairly challenging idea for an organisation that has not moved significantly on this issue for close on two decades. Instead of irredeemable hostility to constitutional change, he argues, the Tories should present their case in a "responsible and mature way", attacking government policy where it is seen to be flawed, but acknowledging that a Scottish parliament is likely to go ahead. And when that happens, it should accept the democratic verdict, and — crucially — "work within a new devolved United Kingdom".

PheW! For those who have been spared the turbulence of Scottish politics over the past 18 years, it is hard to convey just how revolutionary those simple words sound. Under Margaret Thatcher they were tantamount to treason. Under Michael Forsyth they were a matter for withering contempt. Even now it is a bit like hearing Fidel Castro praise his good friends in Washington or

John Redwood congratulate Brussels on its high-minded approach to employment law. Nevertheless, for the first time in more than a decade, it sets out a course ahead for a party that has for too long been at odds with the people it claims to represent. The fact that it comes from Malcolm Rifkind, whose own constitutional journey has not been without incident, makes it doubly compelling.

He was himself a devolutionist once, and a most articulate and persuasive one at that. Under Edward Heath he supported the idea of a legislative assembly in Edinburgh, though he stopped short of the notion that it should have executive powers. Then, contemplating the third reading of Labour's Scotland Bill in 1978, he realised that what was being proposed was a constitutional mess, a set of ill-thought-out proposals he could not possibly vote for. With Scotland itself divided about its merits, he was able to argue that reform was neither beneficial nor wanted. That has been his position ever since, and, as a good lawyer, he has argued the case with some conviction. Now, both propositions have changed.

He wants to work within a devolved UK. Under Thatcher, that view was treason.

Nationalists achieving independence.

He is, therefore, proposing a new Scottish Tory party, one that will have greater autonomy from London, which will be Unionist in instinct but Scottish in action. There will be no question of breaking away from Central Office, because it will still regard itself as British, but it will have its own priorities, contesting council seats and seeking representation in the new parliament on its Scottish rather than its Westminster credentials. Its first task will be to challenge Labour's devolution plans. Does the new parliament really need 129 seats — half as many again as Norway's? Will the Secretary of State be more than a token minister? Who will persuade the Treasury that Scotland still deserves 20 per cent more per head than England in its budget?

But Mr Rifkind's lead is followed, the party will take its place in the new parliament, to argue Scotland's case in a forum where, under proportional representation, it will again have a say. I doubt if Mr Rifkind himself will pick up the leadership baton: he is unlikely to relish the task of rebuilding Tory strength in Scotland alone. But I can see him in the role of party ideologue, perhaps a latterday equivalent of Lord John Russell, the architect of the 1832 Reform Act, who was also a graduate of Edinburgh University. And if Rifkind's Law is seen to work north of the border, there may be those who begin to speculate whether he might not be the man to forge a party recovery further south...

A new generation of Americans is no longer ready to send aid to Eastern Europe, says Diane Kunz

Yesterday President Clinton used the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan to call for a new venture in economic diplomacy. The Marshall Plan, America's most unsordid act, sent \$13 billion dollars (more than \$80 billion today) to Western Europe between 1948 and 1951. Stalin spurned the offer, and forbade Eastern Europe to join in.

Now the President wants to revisit history. He proposes that the European Union and private investors take the lead in creating a new economic initiative, this time to Eastern Europe and Russia. The goal will be to revitalise economies and infrastructures, just as the Marshall Plan did for Western Europe. This is the right proposal at the right time.

Mr Clinton has emphasised that the EU must provide the lion's share of aid for his plan, and he is right to do so. He should also advise Mr Blair and other Western European leaders that the most important thing they can do for Eastern Europe is to provide not a barely credible military guarantee through Nato, but a commitment to the former Communist states — including Russia — that they will be admitted to the EU when they meet the necessary conditions. Such a promise would provide the most effective possible spur for the painful rationalisation that these countries still desperately need.

But as the events of the past five years have proven, the EU is not ready to go it alone when it comes to

Bill's Marshall Plan: you foot the bill

foreign policy. For any new plan to succeed, the United States must play a role and pay a share of the cost. It is unclear whether the President is offering anything more than rhetorical support, but if he really wants to muster concrete American support for a second Marshall Plan, he will find it rough going in Congress.

The received wisdom about Marshall Aid is wrong. In 1947, the American public was not eager to fund yet another aid programme to Europe. After all, in the two years after 1945 the US had given over \$20 billion. The first of the factors that brought about the Marshall Plan was the dire economic plight of Europe. The winter of 1946-47 was one of the worst on record. Frozen trains and closed factories put paid to the notion that a European recovery was in the works.

Half a century ago, the United States had an elite that based its policymaking on two axioms: America would ignore Europe's plight at its peril, and party politics stopped at the water's edge. President Truman,

a Democrat, could call on the support of the Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg and chief Republican foreign policy spokesman John Foster Dulles to work unstintingly for his initiative. The great and the good trooped down to Washington to plead for Congressional support while Dean Acheson travelled throughout the country drumming up local enthusiasm. Most of the 12 million Americans who served in the war had first-hand experience of a devastated Europe.

Most importantly, American leaders worried about Stalin. Until February 1948, it was not clear that Marshall Aid would pass Congress. But the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia ended any serious challenge to it. The Soviet threat propelled all Americans to support a plan that substituted red ink for red blood.

How much has changed. The plight of Eastern Europe today is less visible than it was 50 years ago. The facts, though, are grim, particularly in Russia. Life expectancy has

dropped by seven years since 1991. Deaths exceed births. Diphtheria, polio and tuberculosis are spreading unchecked as health services collapse.

Fifty years ago, American diplomats such as George Kennan and Will Clayton saw that economic chaos could bring communism. Today, many Russians and other Eastern Europeans equate capitalism with robbery, dishonesty and economic collapse. These nascent democracies may well pay the price for our economic indifference.

And yet these facts have fallen off the American radar-screen. While modern media have shrunk the globe, the amount of international news assimilated by the average American has decreased. Newspapers have found that foreign coverage is the kiss of death for circulations, and have reacted accordingly. The TV networks have closed many foreign bureaux. Lacking any knowledge of what is happening abroad, the American public and its legisla-

tors can hardly be faulted for refusing to get involved.

The foreign policy establishment that spearheaded Marshall Aid no longer exists. Unlike their fathers, today's yuppies have no visceral involvement with European security. The more successful the baby-boomer, the more likely it is he spent no time in the military. Winning the war gave an older generation of Americans a stake in winning the peace, but this is not shared by their children.

The Cold War created the logic of American foreign policy. For 45 years there was an instant rationale for every initiative. They won — we lost — a zero-sum game at every moment. With the world divided into two armed camps, everything mattered to everyone; now, it seems, nothing does. Economic self-sufficiency and unthreatened borders once again insulate and isolate the United States; the post-war foreign policy triggers no longer function. The theory that it is far cheaper to fight the forest fire before your house is actually burning (Roosevelt's rationale for lend-lease) now falls on deaf ears.

Perhaps Clinton will be able to break with recent tradition and create an American coalition in favour of a peacetime prophylactic foreign policy. But I wouldn't bet on it.

Diane Kunz is an associate professor of history at Yale and author of *Butter and Guns: America's Cold War Economic Diplomacy* (Free Press).

So is Chirac for the chop?

France is about to deliver a harsh verdict — not just on Juppé, but on the President

Le Monde gets to the heart of the French elections. Yesterday's leading article places the responsibility for the Government's disaster in the first round of the Assembly elections not on the unfortunate Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, but on President Chirac. "The faults which the French have rightly perceived amount to a crisis of confidence in Jacques Chirac himself: the continuous temptation to monopolise power; the reluctance to enter dialogue or accept the point of view of those who do not share his own; the certainty that it is a waste of time to explain himself." But the crisis of confidence goes deeper than that: it is more than a matter of style. Mr Chirac won seven years of power in 1995 by making promises he has not even tried to keep. He was elected because he promised to cut taxes and reduce unemployment; under him, taxes and unemployment have both gone up. His period of office will run until 2002, yet France is in a worse state than when he became President.

The final figures in the first round of the elections show just how disillusioned the French voters have become. It is not only that the parties of the Right won 36 per cent of the votes cast against 42 per cent for the combined Left. No fewer than 32 per cent of the electorate abstained, plus the 5 per cent who expressed their protest by casting blank papers. If one takes the abstainers and those who voted for the National Front, one gets a combined vote of indifference or protest of more than 47 per cent of the electorate, twice the proportion of those who voted for the Government. President Chirac has met this massive vote of no confidence by telling M Juppé that he will have to go, even if the Government should win in the second round. It may work; some commentators still think it will; I cannot see why it should, except that Lionel Jospin's Socialist Party is a quite unreformed tax-and-spend party in alliance with the Communists. The French have every reason to abstain: they face a most unsatisfactory choice.

The election result makes it rather more likely that Europe will end up with a soft single currency. The most probable outcome is that the Left will win the second round of the election,



William Rees-Mogg

as they won the first. The French Socialists have always been in favour of a single currency. Indeed it was a Socialist President (François Mitterrand) and a French Socialist President of the Commission (Jacques Delors) who were responsible with Helmut Kohl for the Maastricht treaty and the single currency proposal. Lionel Jospin has, however, laid down his own conditions for the euro. The large Mediterranean countries, Spain and Italy, must be allowed to join in the first round; there must be more concentration on reducing unemployment; and there must be a political structure to balance the power of the European central bank. He is also committed to creating 700,000 new jobs, which cannot be done without spending money.

A politicised euro, with a greater commitment to high employment, Italian membership and Italian debts, cannot be squared with the Treaty of Maastricht, but it might suit the convenience of some European governments. The big question is whether the Germans would reject it, either in their election next year, or because the German Constitutional Court might find it contrary to the Basic Law. There is the subsidiary question of whether Britain would wish to join such a currency. A soft euro might be easier to join than a hard one, but it might also push sterling to too high an exchange rate

at entry. In any case, what would be the point? If we want to, we can create a weak currency of our own, as we have repeatedly done in the past.

Even if the dismissal of M Juppé does allow the French Government to sneak home in the election, it will not amount even to the damaged and unpopular Government that left office. The Right, if re-elected, may have to be led by Philippe Séguin, the chief opponent of the Maastricht treaty in the French referendum. Admittedly he now says that he accepts the democratic verdict of that referendum and is in favour of a single currency (if rather grudgingly), but he seems, like M Jospin, to be in favour only of a soft euro, one which is compatible with reflationary French economy. M Séguin's supporters say that he wants to make "a synthesis of liberal and social convictions". It is too vague a formula for a strong currency or, for that matter, a strong government.

M Séguin is not certain to become prime minister, even if the governing parties should again be in the major-

ity. The President could conceivably call on his old friend and one-time rival, Edouard Balladur, who has a gift for confusing ideology equal to that of M Séguin. He has told *Le Monde* that he "refuses to copy the Anglo-Saxon model", but wants to invent "a liberalism in the French style". If the majority had an unexpectedly large victory, and M Balladur again became Prime Minister, France could shift back to the discredited policies of Alain Juppé. But that is not likely to happen.

The truth may be that France has outgrown the Gaullist constitution of 1958. The presidency was designed to give disproportionate power to de Gaulle at a time of national crisis. He was constituted an elected dictator with a seven-year term. Jacques Chirac, nearly 40 years later, is the fifth President of France under this constitution. With some fluctuation, each president has become less and less satisfactory in office, down to the scandals and sinister manipulations of Mitterrand's presidency. Jacques Chirac is perhaps the least effective of the five. Apart from his failure to follow the policies on which he was elected, he miscalculated when calling this election, and has damaged and perhaps destroyed his own Government. If he has to cohabit with an unreformed Socialist coalition, the rest of his presidency may be a prolonged, perhaps agonising, fail-

ure. France needs a democracy which works, not a presidential system which stops it working.

The other truth, which the European governments have been determined not to face, is that the Maastricht treaty was from the beginning a deadly threat to the European governments. In England, the treaty was kept under wraps in the 1992 election, but the single currency policy tore apart the Conservative administration, leading eventually to the 1997 landslide. In France, the last Assembly elections resulted in a landslide against the Socialists, because the French economy was already in obvious decline. The new Government itself became unpopular, but there was just enough momentum for President Chirac to be elected on a set of false promises. Now his Prime Minister, M Juppé, has had to go, and the Gaullists have had their smallest vote since 1958. The Maastricht criteria, let alone the single currency, if it is ever introduced, take away the ability of elected governments to determine their own economic policies. Maastricht destroyed the unity of the Conservative Party in Britain, even after the Government regained its freedom by leaving the exchange-rate mechanism. It is a rogue elephant in the vineyard of Europe.

The French election already makes it probable that the single currency on offer will be a weak one, loaded with debts and deficits. At present, Europe enjoys the benefit of the strong German mark, which acts as an anchor for countries that choose to operate the exchange-rate mechanism. Even though sterling floats relative to the mark, Britain benefits from there being at least one strong international currency in Europe. The Germans have enjoyed 40 years of the mark's stability, and of relative freedom from inflation. They see the mark as a powerful symbol of their post-war success, and are proud of it.

One can see that the Germans might be willing to exchange the mark for a strong European currency "as good as the mark". That was never really on offer. Any single European currency would be affected by the less disciplined finances and weaker economies of the other nations. But it was arguable, if never wholly credible, that the Maastricht criteria would produce a single currency only a little weaker than the mark. Nobody can now expect that. Whatever happens on Sunday, the next French Government will not meet the Maastricht criteria, and cannot insist that others do so. A Séguin euro would be a soft euro; a Jospin euro would be even softer. Britain would be foolish to join such a soft currency. Germany would be stark mad to do so.

Spendthrift

LORD IRVINE of Lairg, the new Lord Chancellor, is first out of the traps in the race to spruce up his official residence at the taxpayers' expense. He is planning to refurbish the flat above his rooms in the House of Lords at a rumoured cost of £400,000. His predecessor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, never felt the need to decorate the flat during ten years in office, but the new man has arrived with grand ideas.

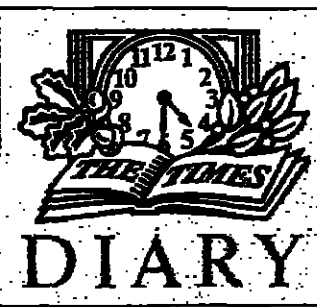


The try-on Chancellor

"Yes, he is considering having it refurbished," confirms an underling at the Lord Chancellor's office. "He hasn't started yet because he has not decided what he wants." But Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone, who once occupied the residence, was surprised by the figure. "The flat is not very large — a man could live there with his wife," he said. "I don't think I would have spent that amount of money, but then I am rather mean by nature."

Left luggage

ASIDE from Diana, Princess of Wales, the spectacle at Louis Vuitton's fundraising lunch yesterday for Junior Friends of the Royal Marsden Hospital was provided by pop singer Adam Ant. Dressed in a bushranger's hat and snake-skin suit, he was accompanied by a lady wearing a Vivienne Westwood bum bag, which made for some discomfort during the sit-down meal. The pair, on a table next to the Princess, quite eclipsed the heavy-hand-



ed style of all those big-haired ladies who lunch.

At the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, there is hand-writing after the arrival of the summer edition of *Opera House*, the institution's glossy magazine. Prominence is given to a feature headlined "Settling In", in which Genista McIntosh "looks to the future" as chief executive. The magazine hit subscribers' doormats two weeks after Genista resigned from the job, blaming stress.

Bit of blusher

THE LATEST victim of the Duchess of York is Rabbi Manis Fried-

man of the Bais Chana Women's Institute of Jewish Studies in St Paul, Minnesota.

Poor Rabbi Friedman's crime was to write a book called *Doesn't Anyone Blush Anymore?* concerning the importance of sensitivity and modesty in relationships. The duchess's interest was pricked and a meeting arranged, which lasted two hours. "She was very keen to meet a Hasidic rabbi," says Friedman. The pair discussed philanthropy and the traditional pushke



Duchess of charity

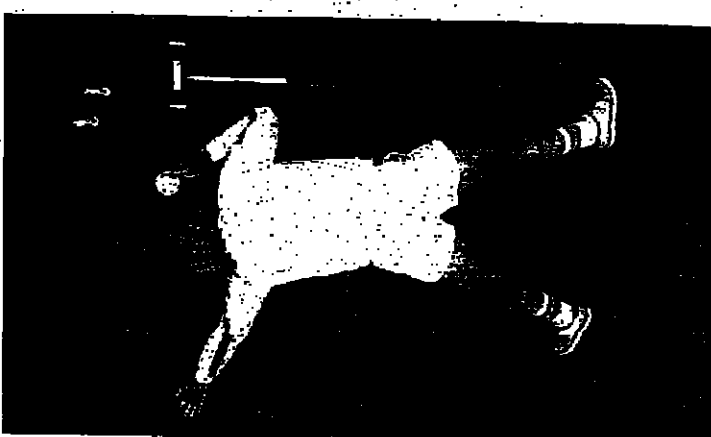
charity box found in Jewish homes for the collection of spare change. "It creates the sound of charity," Friedman told the duchess. Expect one at South York soon.

College days

THESE are heady days at Pembroke College, Oxford, following the appointment of Phil Lader, an old friend of Bill Clinton's, as American Ambassador to London. Lader read law at Pembroke as a young man and is an honorary fellow. Sir John Kerr, the British Ambassador to Washington, is also a Pembroke graduate and honorary fellow. With Kerr on his way home, Robert Stevens, the Master of Pembroke, is heaving with pride and planning a reunion. "When Phil comes over and Sir John returns, we'll be organising a spectacular dinner to celebrate," he says.

Hoopla

SPLENETIC outbursts have marred the start to the croquet season at the Hurlingham Club in south London, home of the vicious sport. Mallets are to be locked up



Hurlingham members have been floored by news of the thefts

for the first time, after a spate of locker-room thefts at the £620-a-year institution.

Members now have to apply for special permission from locker-room officials to use the mallets, and novices may be denied access to the better brands of mallets such as Teltrons and Rileys, which are worth up to £1,000 each. Some members are so upset by the move that they are threatening to boycott the Hurlingham Open Tournament in August. "It is against the whole spirit of the club," says one.

"It suggests that our members are light-fingered which is in itself a gross insult."

American Embassy officials dealing with President Clinton's visit today are only too pleased that he has decided not to say over for the night. "Just one night's stop-over with his entourage would mean having to book 500 hotel rooms," explained one of them.

P.H.S



AMERICAN LESSONS

Blair must ultimately choose between Clinton and Santer

These are days of milk and honey for the Prime Minister. Last week he was hailed by Jacques Santer for his new and "constructive" approach to the European Union. In Paris this week he made his introduction to the international stage. Today in London he and his Cabinet entertain President Clinton amid suggestions on all sides that Anglo-American relations will reach an intimacy exceeding even that which existed between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Tony Blair should enjoy this while it lasts. He cannot be the toast of both Brussels and Washington for much longer. In theory there is no reason why the British Prime Minister should not be able to engage both the United States (and the wider global economy) and the European Union with equal passion. In practice, those now at the heart of the drive for European integration will not trust him or include him if he does.

The purpose of the Maastricht treaty and the prospective Amsterdam treaty is not to restructure Western Europe for amicable economic competition and intense security co-operation with the United States. It is instead to protect Europe from the consequences of economic competition and to prepare the way for a separate defence identity from Nato.

That dilemma has rarely been appreciated by British politicians. Yet it has existed since the then European Economic Community was first mooted. It has always been an exceptionally difficult conundrum for a country whose language, history, and part of its trade face in one direction but whose local interests and the rest of its exports face the other. Two senior postwar figures, Ernest Bevin and Edward Heath, saw the choice most starkly and arrived at radically different answers.

For Bevin, the wider world and especially the United States was the priority. Britain should remain "different in character" from other European nations and "fundamentally incapable of wholehearted integration" with them. For Heath the opposite was true. Under his tenure the term "special relationship" disappeared from Downing Street

press statements. The most he would ever concede was that Britain and the United States shared a "natural relationship".

American statesmen have been no more coherent. Every President since Franklin Roosevelt has urged his British counterpart to become more closely involved in European questions. Bill Clinton will doubtless echo that. But these same administrations have all deceived themselves that the United States could retain the same military and intelligence links — and a transatlantic alliance on trade issues — with a United Kingdom at the centre of the EU enterprise. The two are incompatible.

It is unlikely that such issues will dominate the Cabinet discussions with Mr Clinton this morning. Many in the Labour Party seek advice from the President and his entourage on one subject alone: successful re-election. On this question, Mr Clinton does indeed have an interesting story to tell those assembled today. It is one they should be willing to consider in full.

Mr Clinton has survived and prospered, often against considerable odds, because of a set of decisions during his tenure which have neither all been taken by him nor taken to his liking. He has presided over a progressive but orderly fall in the American budget deficit, a modest retrenchment of the federal government, a dynamic economy based on an imaginative monetary policy pursued by an exceptionally creative central bank chairman, and the persistent expansion of free trade and all overseas markets.

That is not a message that will be much appreciated by "old" Labour. Nor, on the basis of his initial actions, will it be adopted by Gordon Brown. It certainly could and should, however, be accepted by the most enlightened figures within new Labour. On economic matters there is much that Britain can gain from the United States and Tony Blair can learn from Bill Clinton. The problem for this Prime Minister, like so many of his predecessors, is how to reconcile those lessons with his stance towards a European Union that seems ever more determined to resist them.

AN AFRICAN COUP

A confusing test for Cook's moral foreign policy

There could hardly be a clearer case of military adventurism and criminal conspiracy than the coup by junior officers in Sierra Leone. It recalls the all too common assaults on democracy that were accepted with a shrug by the West 20 years ago but are now condemned both by fellow Africans and the friends of Africa abroad.

The plotters are led by a man who was in prison awaiting trial for attempts to overthrow the democratically elected Government of President Kabbah. Major Johnny Koromah rallied freed criminals to his cause and has been supported by rebel groups that have been marauding through the country's interior for the past five years. This should surely be an obvious test for Labour's policy of giving greater attention to human rights.

Yet, as often when morality and diplomacy meet, the best outcome is hard to find. The Government has hinted that it will seek Sierra Leone's expulsion from the Commonwealth at this autumn's summit. It may use a July meeting of an action group intended to keep up the pressure on Nigeria to argue that sanctions should be applied to Sierra Leone. This would be an understandable reaction. But it may well have little effect. Commonwealth membership is increasingly seen as a valuable democratic yardstick by countries seeking aid and investment: Sierra Leone's new rulers appear so far indifferent to anything except their own enrichment.

The country deserves better. One of the poorest in the world, exploited by international mining concerns, Sierra Leone has seen a decade of turbulence. Violence in

neighbouring Liberia spilled across the border encouraging rebels in the interior whose aims were as ill-defined as the violence they employed. Frustration at corruption and military incompetence provoked the coup by Captain Valentine Strasser, who in turn was ousted two years ago. Since then the country has made halting attempts to return to normality: elections were successfully held, international aid agencies returned and the United Nations poured in food and aid to help refugees from the long civil war. That food has now been looted, foreign nationals are being evacuated and the patient attempts to heal the wounds of war appear to be dashed.

The coup, however, does not look solid. Nigerian troops who were attempting to enforce peace in Liberia have secured the airport at Freetown, and Nigeria is now threatening to intervene. This would be a clever move by General Sani Abacha, himself under growing international pressure to accelerate the return to democracy in his country. The Commonwealth has condemned the coup plotters, as has the Organisation of African Unity. Were General Abacha to pose as the saviour of democracy in West Africa, he could deflect pressure from the Commonwealth, and especially now from a Labour Government, for tougher sanctions against his own country. Mr Cook would like a clear-cut case to demonstrate his commitment to human rights, but in Sierra Leone he can find only a mixture of cynicism and opportunism where politics leave little room for moral choice.

MERCATOR'S PERFECTION

Old maps for mental travel, but new maps for getting there

The world's first atlas went on display at the British Library yesterday, bought with a grant of £500,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Men had been trying to map their worlds for 80 centuries before the Dutchman known by his Latinised name, Mercator. But his was the first comprehensive map. He was the first to call his work an atlas, after the Greek Titan who was supposed to carry the universe on his shoulders. Even at a time when the superstitious may have believed in Atlas, his was a mythical exploit.

Mercator's atlas, however, was a giant step for navigators, generals and other world-shakers. His cylindrical projection made possible the accurate placement of longitude, latitude, meridians and parallels. It offered a degree of accuracy which had never before been available to seamen, travellers or ambitious geopoliticians. It defined Europe geographically and culturally for Mercator's contemporaries. It guided the merchant venturers less haphazardly to their new worlds. And it literally changed the way man looked at his old world.

And for all its faults, its influence is still strong. London's southward suburban sprawl has nearly fulfilled Mercator's projection that Surrey was a town. Political tactful modern atlases try to correct his Eurocentric view of the world. And a map with Mecca as the centre of the world, as it still is for millions, shows the battle of Poitiers which finally stopped the advance of

Islam away on the world's rim, with Britain out of sight beyond the pale. Mercator distorts the greater the farther that his latitudes depart from the equator. So Greenland is shown with enormously exaggerated size, although its shape is preserved. Europe and the temperate latitudes of Russia and China look comparatively smaller. And the great equatorial spaces of Africa and Brazil dwindle to insignificance. Mercator's impression of the relative sizes of countries was as misleading a guide for the imperial ambitions of Napoleon and Hitler as it would be for the modern motorist to Milton Keynes.

But it is of unique interest to cartographers and scholars. For it puts the world's crown on the library's collection of early maps, which is the finest in the world. Even to non-scholars it is a document of beauty and romance, charting a step up the ladder of the intellectual advance of man. Old ideas of the world have a long grip. The man in the street's view of the universe is still Newtonian; Einstein and Rutherford might never have existed. Pretentious or nostalgic buffers still go on tour with their 1895 editions of Baedeker. Mercator's atlas is a world treasure. It still shapes most people's picture of the world. But for driving to Milton Keynes the motorist should consult a road atlas. This too will probably be out of date; man still has his reverence for old maps. But at least it may show parts of the MI.

New Labour and approach to EU

From the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir, The changes to the European Union treaties which we are negotiating are modest compared with those agreed by the Conservative Government in the Single European Act and at Maastricht. Yet John Redwood (article, "Amsterdam is the end of Britain", May 24) has strung together several misleading quotations and assertions and liberally sprinkled them with alarmist language so as to arrive at a plot which threatens the very fibre of the British nation.

Let me point out a few of the holes in his leaky argument. On foreign policy he uses two quotations from the draft Amsterdam treaty which are taken word for word from article 1.1 of the Maastricht treaty, which the Conservative Government signed in 1992. I am unaware of any serious suggestion that this article has had the effect which he claims of the United Kingdom being bound hand and foot by decisions it did not support.

Mr Redwood also manages to imply that the Amsterdam treaty would create some new legal order — but again he quotes from the 1992 treaty (article F.3) to back this up. He implies that the new treaty would give the European Court of Justice threatening new powers over Acts of Parliament. This Government has made clear that we will retain the veto for foreign policy and will retain national control over our immigration policy.

Of course during the Conservative leadership campaign we shall see a good deal more of this sort of scare-mongering. But I hope that afterwards they will be able to return to a rational debate about Europe. This subject is of central importance for our country and for too long it has been distorted to suit internal Tory party feuding.

Yours faithfully,
DOUG HENDERSON,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
London, SW1A 2AH.
May 28.

From the Chair and Vice-Chair of the European Movement — UK

Sir, William Rees-Mogg makes both assumptions and assertions in his article, "Is Euroscepticism dead?" (May 22), which need to be challenged.

He asserts that "there is a deep underlying Euroscepticism in Britain" and that "more people want to come out altogether than want to integrate further". In fact, polling by MORI for the European Movement shows that 49 per cent of the population could be persuaded to support closer economic and political links if they thought it would be good for Britain, and that even those who want to leave Europe could be persuaded to radically change their views if they saw integration as being in Britain's interests.

The truth is that Euroscepticism has only shallow support, and what people want is more information. The level of public knowledge of European issues is very low, and on the single currency, in the same poll, 81 per cent call for a government White Paper clearly setting out the pros and cons. That's a demand to which the Government should respond.

William Rees-Mogg's assumption that the real issue is self-government for Britain must also be challenged. The point of the EU is to pool sovereignty so that as a result people can have more, not less, control over their destiny.

Yours etc,
GILES RADICE,
Chair,
ALAN WATSON,
Vice-Chair,
European Movement — UK,
Dean Bradley House,
52 Horseferry Road, SW1.
May 23.

From the Director of Cable and Broadcasting Research Alliance

Sir, I'm sure that John Lloyd ("Full steam ahead for HMS Euro", May 23) is right when he states that the new Labour Government is in favour of entering EMU — so why not openly campaign for it instead of sticking to his fraudulent "wait and see" policy?

Now that the party (of which I am a member) is in government it will have to set out the known pros and cons of joining EMU well before a referendum. When this has been done I forecast that most voters will conclude that the modest benefits in no way match the huge economic costs of the change-over. This view will be further strengthened in the near future with the introduction of new smart-card systems which will give all the advantages of a common global (not just European) currency without any cost to the taxpayers or consumers.

The case for EMU will then rest on its supposed political benefits — most of which would not be of interest to voters even if they came free of charge.

Best regards,
M. D. RULE,
Director,
Cable & Broadcasting
Research Alliance,
CABRA House, Russell Road, NW9.
May 24.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Appeal to Government on disability

From Lord Rix, Chairman of Mencap

Sir, I applaud the appeal by Alf Morris in his excellent article today for political parties "to speak with one voice" to reassure disabled people of their support for all the Acts affecting them.

All of us concerned with disability tried to persuade the contending parties to place community care high on their list of manifesto promises: without success — and, regrettably, the new Government has not filled us with confidence as to its future intentions. Already, the Minister dealing specifically with disability has been dispensed with and the responsibility spread around numerous departments. It may work; it may not — but the jury is still out.

Last week in the House of Lords that doughty fighter for the rights of disabled people, Lord Ashley of Stoke, expressed his disquiet at the Government's failure to make any reference to disability legislation in the Queen's Speech, whilst I commented that community care is still a lottery and the service one receives depends on where one lives and the funding that one's local authority has and makes available.

The Government is moving at lightning speed in many directions. As yet, disability does not seem to be a

priority. Let us hope that the Chancellor will make provision for genuine community care — nationwide — when he finally unveils his proposals for a windfall tax. Six and a half million disabled people are just as deserving of urgent consideration as the young unemployed.

Yours etc,
BRIAN RIX,
House of Lords,
May 26.

From Mr Jonathan G. Kaye

Sir, I strongly support the sentiments of Alf Morris with regard to the care needs of disabled people. I further hope that in any deliberations that follow, a moment is also taken to review the absurd criteria that govern eligibility to the care component of Disability Living Allowance, and thus access to the Independent Living Fund (1993), which are currently doing so much to prevent thousands of us nationwide pursuing the independence we desire.

Yours sincerely,
JONATHAN KAYE,
Bridlepath, 49 Nicholas Way,
Northwood, Middlesex.
May 26.

Value of breast-feeding

From Ms Liz Bushell

Sir, Dr Thomas Stuttford (Medical briefing, May 21) casts doubt on the wisdom of mothers who breast-feed their babies beyond toddlerhood. Questioning the immunological and nutritional value of breast milk to the child after the third month, he also airs his concern about the possible adverse effects of prolonged lactation on women's reproductive and sexual function.

Overwhelmingly, research demonstrates the benefits of extended breast-feeding, including indications of reduced risk of diabetes and heart disease to the child. The World Health Organisation recommends the practice "up to two years of age or beyond" for children also enjoying a balanced and varied diet.

In the UK only a minority of mothers continue breast-feeding beyond the first year or so and the La Leche League supports mothers who choose to respond to their child's needs in this way.

Among the challenges facing such mothers Dr Stuttford quotes Barry

Lewis, a consultant paediatrician, as saying a child may become "over-dependent on the mother, causing problems ranging from rejection of babysitters to difficulties when starting at the nursery school".

Such problems are in our view symptomatic of the conflict between breast-feeding and consumerism, which may devalue breast milk in favour of artificial substitutes. This contributes to the false impression that mothers who breast-feed an older child have, in some way, failed in their mothering and are over-protective.

In our experience, children who are happily breast-fed grow into responsible, independent adults. Mothers who continue to breast-feed until the child outgrows the need are ensuring a sound basis for that child's development, and deserve to be congratulated on their success.

Yours sincerely,
LIZ BUSHELL,
(Director,
Health Professional Liaison),
La Leche League (Great Britain),
PO Box 29, West Bridgford,
Nottingham NG2 7NP.
May 23.

A London authority

From Mr Stephen Pewsey

Sir, Councillor Richard Buckley argues for "city-wide government" for London (letter, May 19), but what does he mean by London? There is no intrinsic need for a revived London strategic authority to encompass the same boundaries as the former GLC.

There was no referendum when that late levitation swallowed up large chunks of neighbouring counties back in the 1960s. But even though the GLC has disappeared, we are still left with the undignified spectacle of good old towns like Uxminster, Bexley, Wembley and Kingston upon Thames being described as within "London

boroughs". These places were parts of Essex, Kent, Middlesex and Surrey respectively for hundreds of years before "big is best" planners herded them reluctantly into "Greater" London.

There has been no "Greater" London for a decade now, so surely this is the ideal opportunity to restore the capital's original and ancient boundaries, and give us back our proper counties. If there must be a London authority, then let it confine itself to the inner metropolitan area defined by the old LCC boundary.

Yours etc,
STEPHEN PEWSEY,
59 Wrotham Path, Loughton, Essex.
May 19.

Assisted places

From Mrs Marilyn Day

Sir, I wish to congratulate Councillor and Chair of (school) Governors, Mrs Ann Cains, upon her good fortune in being able to ensure her two sons had the privilege of attending an excellent state comprehensive school near her home (letter, May 23).

Unfortunately we do not all enjoy this luxury and do the best we can when living somewhere which cannot offer our children such benefits. Place of work usually determines where we have to live, not always in a good catchment area.

Being state educated ourselves, we tried the local primary school in the early 1980s with disastrous results.

Downing Street cat

From Dr I. M. Blake

Sir, Disturbed by reports that Humphrey was Felix *non grata*, I offered him retirement from politics through the now unannounced cat-flap at this far humbler (but singularly felicitous) address.

Today I received his photograph and assurance that "Downing Street is Humphrey's home, and he is welcome to stay", together with cheering information that "one of the first things the Blair children wanted to see when they moved into No 11 was Humphrey" — clearly the younger generation have exactly the right priorities.

Edward Lear observed "human nature is pretty much the same all along. On the whole perhaps Pussycat nature is the best". Is it not comforting, on the accession of untried politicians, to know that the welfare of the nation remains in a safe pair of paws?

I remain, Yours faithfully,
IAN BLAKE,
Blair Cottage, Autgrishan,
Melvaig, Gairloch, Wester Ross.
May 24.

PS. Cat lovers, of course, have long realised that PC did not really stand for Privy Councillor.

No bishops on Kirk horizons

From the Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the Church of Scotland

Sir, In your leader, "Crisis in the Kirk" (May 26), you pass some ill-informed comments on my report to the recent General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The suggestion that the Church of Scotland might consider possible advantages to be had from the introduction of bishops was not about internal reform nor was it about giving up our excellent Presbyterian structures. We are looking ahead to a united Church in Scotland which, as well as Presbyterians and Episcopalians, will include Methodists and Congregationalists, and elements of the United Reformed Church.

Bishops in this united Church would be part of a structure that retains all the elements you so admire in the present Church of Scotland, strengthened by the more democratic Congregationalist traditions. Since the Episcopal tradition in Scotland is in any case more democratic than that in the Church of England, this will not be the major problem I suspect it might be south of the border.

I have no difficulty, therefore, in assuring your readers (who must have lost a deal of sleep over the matter) that "the spirit of the Reformation" does still survive in good health here in Scotland, and will continue to do so well into the third millennium.

We are talking about growth and development — not decline: for our watchword has always been "ecclesia reformata semper reformanda" (a reformed Church always needing to be reformed). Even the best can be improved.

Yours sincerely,
DUNCAN E. MCCLEMENTS,
Convener, Ecumenical Relations Committee, Church of Scotland,
Grahamstown United Church,
30 Russell Street, Falkirk.
May 27.

Crime statistics

From Mr J. Staunton

Sir, So a survey (report, "England and Wales lead crime league of Western nations", May 27) has shown that if for 50 years you actively attempt to imitate the United States by introducing every sociological fad current in that society, as well as allowing their violent, crime-obsessed films to dominate popular "entertainment", the crime rate in England and Wales will tend to follow the American rather than the European trend.

How extraordinary. Who would ever have thought such a thing likely? Yours faithfully,
J. STAUNTON,
10 Orchard Road, Dagenham, Essex.
May 27.

Lucky for some?

From Mr Wm Jones

Sir, A number of phone calls today (the day following Bank Holiday) soon established that the Government and local government offices I was hoping to contact were closed for the day. All businesses I rang, however, were open for trading.

One nation? Yours faithfully,
WYN JONES,
Blancilodge House,
Ludchurch,
Narberth, Pembrokeshire.
May 27.

Steering committee

From Mr T. P. Blenkin

Sir, Your report (May 24) that a prototype supermarket trolley with a self-centring steering system may eliminate "erratic trolley control".

Perhaps it will also dispel my long-held belief that the difference between a supermarket trolley and a non-executive director is that, while both hold a vast quantity of food and drink, only the trolley has a mind of its own.

Yours faithfully,
T. P. BLENKIN,
Blenkin & Co (chartered surveyors),
29 High Petergate, York.
May 27.

Pole positions

From Mr Stuart Dunlop

Sir, At great expense, a group of people has been airlifted to a position close to the North Pole (reports, May 27, 28). From there, this group has walked to the North Pole. We are expected to celebrate this fact. Am I missing something?

I am, yours sincerely,
STUART DUNLOP,
Arden House,
Shoppengangers Road,
Maidenhead, Berkshire.
May 28.

From Mr A. J. Saunders

Sir, My congratulations to the all-woman Polar expedition on their success. I have just one question: who did the map-reading?

Yours etc,
A. J. SAUNDERS,
16 Silchester Way,
Westleas, Swindon, Wiltshire.
May 27.

| TODAY | AM | HT | PM | HT | TODAY | AM | HT | PM | HT |
|------------------|-------|------|-------|------|--------------|-------|-----|-------|-----|
| London Bridge | 07.45 | 6.8 | 20.0 | 6.4 | Liverpool | 06.35 | 4.9 | 21.22 | 4.6 |
| Aberdeen | 07.18 | 3.7 | 19.12 | 3.6 | Loughborough | 06.03 | 5.5 | 17.42 | 5.3 |
| Newcastle | 07.43 | 11.6 | 20.18 | 11.2 | Lewisham | 06.39 | 2.2 | 15.25 | 2.3 |
| Gillingham | 07.45 | 3.3 | 17.46 | 3.0 | Margate | 06.40 | 4.8 | 18.09 | 4.3 |
| Cardiff | 09.29 | 10.8 | 12.28 | 10.5 | Marine Haven | | | | |
| London | 11.35 | 4.7 | | | Newquay | 11.23 | 5.9 | 17.57 | 5.0 |
| Doncaster | 09.02 | 5.9 | 17.26 | 6.0 | Oswestry | 10.40 | 3.0 | | |
| Dublin (N.Wall) | 05.36 | 3.8 | 18.34 | 3.6 | Penzance | 10.22 | 4.6 | 23.24 | 4.6 |
| Carmarthen | 11.10 | 4.5 | 23.34 | 4.5 | Portsmouth | 06.09 | 4.2 | 18.13 | 4.3 |
| Belfast | 06.10 | 3.3 | 15.28 | 3.1 | Shrewsbury | 06.39 | 4.2 | 17.41 | 3.5 |
| Falmouth | 05.36 | 3.8 | 17.55 | 3.7 | Southernhay | 04.33 | 4.1 | 17.16 | 4.2 |
| Hull | 04.12 | 5.1 | | | Swansea | 06.00 | 4.8 | 12.34 | 4.1 |
| Leeds | | | 12.08 | 7.8 | Torquay | 06.35 | 3.9 | 22.41 | 4.9 |
| Sheffield | | | 12.07 | 5.8 | Wotton-on-N. | | | 17.54 | 3.6 |
| Stirling & Lyonn | 00.13 | 5.6 | | | | | | | |

All times BST. Heights in metres.

Sun rises
4.52 am

Moon sets
12.44 pm

Sun sets
0.05 pm

Moon rises
1.35 am

London 9.05 pm to 4.51 am

Bristol 9.14 pm to 5.01 am

Edinburgh 6.43 pm to 4.37 am

Manchester 6.24 pm to 4.48 am

Peterhead 9.20 pm to 5.19 am

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THURSDAY MAY 29 1997

Anglian says windfall tax will delay price cuts



Green: profits advance

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

ANGLIAN WATER yesterday conceded that the Government's windfall tax was likely to be legal although it will tell Treasury officials next week that the levy will mean less cash for investment and that customer price cuts will be delayed.

Anglian is pledged to fight the tax if it is legally flawed, but John Green, managing director of water services, said: "We would expect any tax to be levied on a legal basis." He said: "There has been no windfall and the tax is retrospective and unfair. But we accept the Government has a mandate."

Mr Green said the company would emphasise at the Treasury meeting that the tax would mean there would be less cash available for discretionary investment and that customers would not see price cuts as fast as they would have done otherwise.

Anglian gave further fuel to supporters of the windfall tax yesterday with a 7.7 per cent increase in pre-tax profits and a 15 per cent rise in its dividend, with the payment brought forward six weeks.

A similar aggressive dividend growth is promised with future results as Anglian is committed to cutting dividend cover to two times by the millennium. It now stands at 2.5. But Mr Green denied that its dividend payout and profits showed Anglian had been loosely regulated.

BUSINESS TODAY

| STOCK MARKET INDICES | | | |
|----------------------|----------|------------|--|
| FTSE 100 | 4677.5 | (-4.1) | |
| Yield | 3.50% | | |
| FTSE All share | 2222.4 | (-1.51) | |
| Nikkei | 20351.34 | (+461.45) | |
| New York | | | |
| Dow Jones | 7381.26 | (-2.15) | |
| S&P Composite | 845.87 | (+0.16) | |
| US RATE | | | |
| Federal Funds | 5.75% | (5.75%) | |
| Long Bond | 5.87% | (5.87%) | |
| Yield | 7.00% | (7.03%) | |
| LONDON MONEY | | | |
| 3-mth interbank | 6 1/4% | (6 1/4%) | |
| Libor long gilt | 11 1/2% | (11 1/2%) | |
| STERLING | | | |
| New York | 1.6375* | (1.6310) | |
| \$ | | | |
| DM | 1.6382 | (1.6288) | |
| FF | 2.7796 | (2.7710) | |
| FF | 1.9367 | (1.9347) | |
| SF | 2.3188 | (2.3097) | |
| Yen | 189.12 | (188.95) | |
| S index | 95.3 | (95.5) | |
| DOLLAR | | | |
| London | | | |
| DM | 1.6393* | (1.7050) | |
| FF | 5.7209 | (5.7615) | |
| FF | 1.4185* | (1.4208) | |
| Yen | 115.47* | (116.67) | |
| S index | 102.3 | (102.7) | |
| Tokyo close Yen | 116.30 | | |
| NORTH SEA OIL | | | |
| Brent 15-day (Aug) | \$19.35 | (\$19.30) | |
| GOLD | | | |
| London close | \$344.25 | (\$343.65) | |

Regan's lawyer attacks CWS boss

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

A SOLICITOR representing Andrew Regan, the entrepreneur behind the ill-fated £1.2 billion bid to take over the Co-operative Wholesale Society, yesterday accused the head of the CWS of waging "a malicious, personal vendetta".

Ian Burton, who is defending Mr Regan, 31, in a private prosecution brought by the CWS, said after an initial hearing yesterday that "the only thing Andrew Regan is guilty of is attempting to put a proposition to the members of the CWS".

The hearing at the City of London Magistrates' Court was adjourned until June 18 at the request of the defendants. They are Mr Regan, his partner, David Lyons, and Allan Green, former head of retail at the CWS, who was fired after admitting that he had provided Mr Regan and Mr Lyons with commercially sensitive documents.

The defendants' representatives said that they had received papers relating to the case only last week. The adjournment was not opposed by CWS. The society has accused Mr Green of theft and Mr Regan and Mr Lyons of aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring the theft and of handling stolen property.

Mr Regan and Mr Lyons did not attend the hearing. Mr Green did, but declined to make any comment.

All three defendants must attend on June 18, when it will be decided whether the matter will be heard by the magistrates or in the Crown Court.

Jobs and EMU get equal billing by Cook

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday said European Union initiatives to increase levels of employment should have equal weight with meeting the financial criteria of European monetary union.

The signal, by Mr Cook, of Britain's clear intention to support new employment provisions in the governing treaty of the EU prompted British business leaders to say that they would oppose the move.

The Conservative Government had strongly opposed the addition of an "employment chapter" to the treaty governing the EU, insisting that it would increase labour market rigidities and confuse overall economic objectives.

Ruth Lea, policy head of the Institute of Directors, said: "I'm sceptical. It's either just motherhood and apple pie — or it's something which just doesn't fit with the monetary criteria for a single currency." Directors believed that an employment chapter was no substitute for real economic growth.

The Confederation of British Industry said it opposed any moves that reduced labour market flexibility in Europe.

Insisting that EU member states had to address fully the "No 1 concern across Europe" of jobs and unemployment, Mr Cook said: "That is why we will support an employment chapter within the treaty of the European Union. We will do so because we believe it is very important that we should balance the monetary targets that are already in the treaty linked to the single currency with broader economic objectives such as higher levels of employment."

Ministers believe that the Amsterdam summit, which will be the conclusion of the lengthy inter-governmental Conference on the future of the EU, will now adopt an employment chapter to sit alongside the single currency monetary targets on deficit, debt and inflation.

LVMH move threatens £23bn Guinness merger

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton threatened yesterday to force Guinness out of all joint-venture arrangements between the two companies, in a move that could derail the £23 billion planned merger between Guinness and Grand Metropolitan.

LVMH, which holds a 14.2 per cent stake in Guinness, is seeking to activate a "change of control" clause in its agreement with the British beer and spirits company that allows it to buy back the Guinness stake in the joint ventures at only asset value if there is a takeover at the company.

If the move is successful, the French luxury goods company — which owns brands ranging from Givenchy to Dom Perignon champagne — would end up owning the exclusive distribution rights to Guinness products in vital American and Far Eastern markets for up to ten years.

Under the change of control clause, LVMH is also entitled to buy Guinness's 34 per cent stake in Moët Hennessy at a discount of up to 15 per cent of the estimated £1 billion market price.

But Guinness, which owns brands such as Johnnie Walker whisky and Gordon's gin, insisted that the planned merger involved no change of control. The company said it was "completely confident" of its position having taken legal advice before the merger, which will create a new company known as GMG brands. Guinness added that LVMH's move would not delay the merger timetable.

However, LVMH's intervention unsettled the stock market, which fears the dispute could lead to a lengthy legal battle in the French courts next year, and add another hurdle to the complex merger. Shares in Guinness closed down 14p, at 532p, while GrandMet shares fell 15 1/2 p, to 581 1/2 p.

LVMH first linked up with Guinness ten years ago, cementing the deal with cross-shareholdings between the two companies. But the relationship between Guinness and LVMH has soured over the past 18 months after Bernard Arnault, chairman of LVMH, found his calls for Guinness to demerge its brewing operations blocked by Tony Greener, the chairman. M. Arnault, who also serves

as a Guinness director, has consistently opposed the GMG merger plans, arguing instead for a tie-up between the spirits and wines operations of the three companies, and the demerger of Guinness and GrandMet's other businesses. LVMH said yesterday that its proposal for a three-way merger was still open for discussions.

The City believes LVMH has little realistic hope of stopping the GMG deal in the long term, and M. Arnault's latest move is interpreted as an attempt to force Guinness and GrandMet to negotiate with him over an alternative exit plan for LVMH.

Guinness said yesterday it is prepared to fight M. Arnault in the courts, but may opt instead to offer some compensatory payment to LVMH. Analysts estimate that it would cost Guinness up to £1 billion to buy LVMH's share of the distribution rights to Guinness products in the Far East and America.

The LVMH joint-venture agreements are particularly sensitive to Guinness and GrandMet as the two companies are hoping to use these distribution channels to promote sales of GrandMet brands in the Far East where the food and spirits company has weak coverage. Analysts also noted that the continuing battle between Guinness and LVMH could damage the performance of the 17 joint-venture arrangements between Guinness and LVMH.

Commentary, page 27



Bernard Arnault, LVMH chairman, hoping to activate 'change of control' clause

Battle calls emergency electricity meeting

THE Government is to summon the heads of all regional electricity companies to an emergency meeting in an effort to keep on track the ambitious programme to enable households to shop around for electricity from next April (Christine Buckley writes).

The demand comes after a meeting yesterday between John Battle, the Industry, Energy and Finance Minister, and Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, amid speculation in the industry that the Government could delay the project rather than risk anticipated chaos.

The meeting yesterday is the second between the two in the short life of the

Labour administration. Mr Battle said: "I want to see competition introduced on schedule, wherever that is possible. We cannot afford a crisis of confidence in energy markets at this stage."

The regulator's office said that it was working towards April 1998, but advisers were looking at potential problems. A report will be published today.

The Government has made competition in electricity a priority after a stream of complaints from inside and outside the industry that the huge project lacked leadership and was in danger of falling into chaos.

Rowland pits influence against Lonrho merger

TINY ROWLAND, the former chief executive of Lonrho, has vowed to use his influence with the Ghanaian Government and as a director of Ashanti, the gold miner, to block the proposed £2 billion merger between Lonrho and JCI, the South African mining group (Jason Nissé writes).

He has also said that he may ask the European Commission to block the deal. The Commission has already intervened in Lonrho affairs to press for Anglo American, the South African conglomerate, to cut its 28 per cent holding to under 10 per cent.

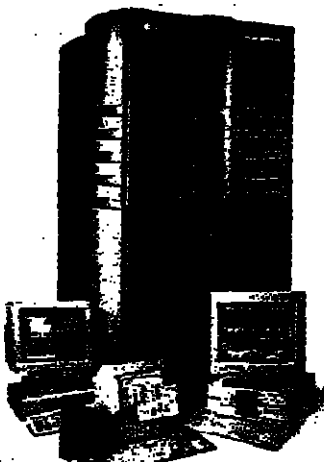
Mr Rowland yesterday issued a circular to Lonrho shareholders detailing

ing his objections to the deal, which would involve Lonrho buying JCI and selling Lonrho's 41 per cent holding in Ashanti to Anglo. Mr Rowland values the stake at more than £500 million.

Mr Rowland said that the deal benefited only Anglo, and he chastised Lonrho's management, led by the former Observer sales manager Nick Morrell. "Shareholders have suffered a number of defeats and wrong turnings at Lonrho," he said.

Merger talks between Lonrho and JCI continue in London. Lonrho said that a bulletin may be issued tomorrow.

Commentary, page 27



Morse.

Computer Systems for the Enterprise.



Up to 60% make errors on tax form

By ADAM JONES

THE Inland Revenue's hopes of a smooth debut for self-assessment, its new tax collection regime, were dented yesterday after claims that some tax offices have been swamped by incorrectly completed returns.

The Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union (PTC) said that, in the worst-hit tax offices, one in two forms need correction. An article in *Accountancy Age* magazine puts the figure as high as 60 per cent in some areas.

Self-assessment is the new system designed to take much of the financial burden of tax collection away from the Inland Revenue. Eight million taxpayers, including the self-employed and those with investment income, were last month sent a return to fill in.

They must calculate their own tax liability if the forms are not returned by September 30.

The Revenue says that 401,000 returns had already been received by May 25.

Graham Steel, a PTC spokesman, said: "Quite a high percentage of the returns that have been received so far have contained mistakes." He said that the proportion varies from 5 per cent to 50 per cent.

Mr Steel claimed that early returns tended to be from taxpayers who are not using tax advisers to help them to fill in the form. He said: "They have no real experience of completing a form. The kind of mistakes they are making are simple."

The PTC has opposed self-assessment, and the attendant job cuts in the Inland Revenue, arguing that the UK tax system is too complex for taxpayers to understand easily, without using tax advisers or accountants.

An Inland Revenue spokesman dismissed the claims of high error rates as "anecdotal" and said that reliable statistics have not been compiled yet. He said that obvious mistakes could often be corrected internally, but the Revenue would otherwise have to contact the taxpayer.

The spokesman admitted that the guidance book issued to tax advisers contains an error on the taxation of share option schemes that was missed in the appendix of corrections already sent out.

Accountancy Age claimed that the error could affect as many as 1.5 million people. The Revenue spokesman said that it was unlikely that the mistake would lead to over-payment of tax.

John Whiting, head of personal tax at Price Waterhouse, said yesterday that the self-assessment return was as clear as it could be. He said: "There are a few quirks, but, on the whole, it's not a bad form."

Germany set on revaluing gold reserves

THE German Government last night stuck to its plans to revalue the Bundesbank's reserves, in spite of strong criticism of the proposals by the German central bank (George Sivell writes).

Last week, Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, surprised financial markets by saying that he wanted to raise the value of the Bundesbank's gold reserves in an attempt to increase the central bank's profits, which could, in turn, be used to trim Germany's budget deficits.

Last night the governing coalition in Germany said that it believed the revaluation plans for the reserves would not affect the stability and independence of the Bundesbank.



Derek Finlay, left, and Paul Munn with a model wearing a 1997 knitwear garment

Near treble for Dawson

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

DAWSON International, the maker of Pringle jumpers, nearly trebled pre-tax profits to £125 million in the year to March 29.

Derek Finlay, chairman, said that the improvement from £43 million a year ago, was down to an improved performance in the fabrics division and a turnaround in

knitwear and clothing, which saw losses cut by more than £5 million.

Mr Finlay, who runs the company with Paul Munn, finance director, said: "These results have been achieved despite continued tough and at times fragile trading conditions in all of our markets."

He added: "I am increasing-

ly confident that provided the competitive position of our UK operations is not eroded by the continued strengthening of sterling, Dawson will make further solid progress in the current year."

The company will pay a final dividend of 1.8p (1.5p) on August 13, giving a full-year dividend of 3.3p.

NAO sees Andersen contract as good value

By JASON NISSE

THE National Audit Office (NAO) yesterday described as "strikingly good value" a contract with the Contributions Agency that cost Andersen Consulting, the management consultant, £23.1 million to revise.

Its report describes the tendering process for the £171 million deal to computerise the National Insurance Recording System in Newcastle as containing "examples of good practice and some lessons... which may be of value in pursuing other Private Finance Initiative schemes".

The contract was awarded to Andersen in spite of tough competition and was due to be completed on the original timetable in February this year.

However, Ian Watmore, Andersen's head of government, decided last year that the consultant could not meet the deadline. It has now been rescheduled to be completed next year.

The NAO reported that to change the contract Andersen agreed to not take any payments for the first year, at a cost of £8 million. Andersen also bore £8.5 million of additional development costs, covered the Contributions Agency's costs of £3.5 million, and paid compensation of £3.1 million. The total cost to Andersen was £23.1 million.

In exchange, Andersen will retain the intellectual property rights to the software it developed. Mr Watmore said that this should be highly marketable and if it completed the contract to the revised schedule this would be a "good deal overall" for Andersen.

Mr Watmore expects the system to be up and running by February, two months ahead of the revised schedule.

If Andersen misses the deadlines it will incur further penalties, which could, ultimately, be as much as £93 million, according to the NAO.

Arthur Andersen did not develop the Taurus system for the Stock Exchange, contrary to Monday's report. Although it advised the exchange on information technology, the Taurus system was developed by Coopers & Lybrand.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Societies seek return of £80m by Treasury

THREE building societies yesterday mounted a legal challenge in the European Court of Human Rights that could force the Treasury to repay taxes totalling more than £80 million. The National and Provincial, Leeds Permanent and Yorkshire Building Society claim human rights breaches because of changes in the law that prevented them going to court over the way tax is levied. The changes came after the Woolwich Building Society won a £70 million tax refund.

When the three societies launched their cases the laws on how tax was raised on building society interest were changed retroactively, the Strasbourg court was told, shielding the Treasury from proceedings to recoup nearly £16 million paid by the National and Provincial, £57 million by the Leeds Permanent and nearly £9 million by the Yorkshire. The tax was levied under transitional arrangements introduced by the Treasury to remedy a gap of several months in the tax-raising system on building societies. A verdict is expected this year.

City addition for M&S

MARKS & SPENCER is to build a second store in the City of London as part of its £1.5 billion expansion drive. The retailer, which last year spent £1 million a week building its first store at Finsbury Pavement in the City, has bought the freehold of 168 Fenchurch Street from Barclays Bank to convert to a 75,000 sq ft outlet. It also plans to add 500,000 sq ft to its existing stores this financial year, including new outlets in Cribbs Causeway, Bristol, and Newry, Northern Ireland.

Hollick leaves BAE

LORD HOLICK of Notting Hill has resigned as non-executive director of British Aerospace, the leading defence and aviation group, after being appointed a special adviser to Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade. Lord Hollick, who joined the BAE board in 1992, was said to fear possible conflicts of interest. BAE said his new commitments would keep him too busy to continue as a director. BAE has not yet announced his replacement.

Omnicare takeover

OMNICARE, the AIM-listed healthcare equipment company, has received a recommended 167p-a-share cash offer from Transworld, valuing it at £193 million. The US company owns, or has irrevocable acceptances relating to, 50.83 per cent of Omnicare shares. Robert Fine, president of Transworld Healthcare, Transworld's parent, said: "We view this... as an excellent opportunity to expand our business internationally."

Hepworth pound fears

SHARES in Hepworth fell 4p to 254p after the building materials group said at its annual meeting that the strength of sterling will have an adverse effect on overseas earnings this year. Hepworth said that the group's British and continental operations are maintaining sales volumes with the underlying trading outlook positive, but the level of sterling at current rates will have an £8 million to £9 million impact on overseas earnings and export margins.

Fortune discusses sale

BARRY CHEUNG, chief executive of Fortune Oil, yesterday told its annual meeting that it is in discussions to sell East Midlands Oil & Gas, its UK onshore oil production business, which had net assets of £860,000 at December 31. Fortune is also looking to sell Fuo Duo, its liquefied petroleum gas business in China, which had a net asset value of £3.7 million. Both businesses reported small losses for 1996. Mr Cheung said Fortune has continued to make good progress this year.

Adidas chief to stay

ROBERT LOUIS-DREYFUS, Adidas chief executive, said that he did not plan to step down and join the German sportswear maker's supervisory board next year as he had earlier planned. Mr Louis-Dreyfus, who has engineered the turnaround of Adidas after leading a group of international investors that bought the once-troubled group, said at the group's annual meeting that he would like to remain on the management board through the turn of the century.

Caution on devolution

THE Inland Revenue should continue to administer the tax-code system in Scotland if Scottish devolution goes ahead, the British Retail Consortium said today. The BRC, which represents thousands of retailers on both sides of the border, also urged devolutionists to protect cross-border business by not varying trading laws or business rates too far from the UK norm. The BRC, in a paper out today, said that existing practices should be followed wherever possible.

Sony and Toyota talk

SONY and the Toyota Motor group are discussing a plan to develop an electronics components business, expanding their already extensive reach into new fields. Sony and Toyota Automatic Loom Works, a subsidiary of Toyota Motor, are considering forming a joint venture to produce next-generation liquid crystal displays (LCDs), at present used mainly as displays in notebook computers, are expected to be widely used in desktop computers and televisions when prices come down.

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Woolwich payout to average £1,400

By CAROLINE MERRILL

THE share price of the Woolwich Building Society, which is due to be floated in July, could reach 250p, according to estimates, pushing the value of the average share windfall for the 2.5 million members to more than £1,400.

The increase in share price has been boosted by a rise in the estimated value of the society and a decrease in the number of people qualifying for shares. In January, Woolwich was estimated to be worth £3.2 billion and the share price between 175p and 200p, now HSBC James Capel estimates the society could be worth £4 billion.

Woolwich originally planned to issue 1.69 billion shares. However, in its listing particulars issued yesterday, it revealed it planned to issue 1.6 billion shares - a fall of 5 per cent. The society said some

members had accidentally disqualified themselves from the shares, either through allowing their accounts to drop below a certain amount, or by paying off their mortgages.

Listing particulars will be sent to Woolwich members over the next week. The society will make its stock market debut on July 7.

Like the other floating societies, the Woolwich is offering a free dealing service for those who opt to sell their shares immediately.

Woolwich members will be offered the chance of holding their shares in a corporate nominee account or personal equity plan (Pep), or they can opt for share certificates. As well as a single company Pep, the Woolwich is also offering a general Pep.

Members must return their forms by the end of June.

Critics round on US telecom merger plans

CONSUMER groups and Wall Street analysts combined yesterday to pour doubt on whether the proposed \$50 billion merger of AT&T and SBC, the US telecommunications groups, would go ahead (Richard Thomson writes).

Critics said that the move would be so anti-competitive that the Federal Communications Commission would block it completely. The merged company would have total dominance of the market in the US south and south-

west, they said. The Consumer Federation of America attacked the idea of a merger, which would give the new company 60 per cent of the long distance market, as anti-competitive. "Nothing about deregulation is working in favour of competition," said Mark Cooper of the CFA.

Bryan Van Dusen, director of telecommunications research at the Yankee Group, a research consultant, agreed the merger would violate the spirit of deregulation.

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The European Parliament

announces that it has issued an open call for tenders relating to furniture for the meeting rooms of the Espace Léopold building in Brussels, Rue Wiertz.

The total contract, subdivided into lots, is for 930 seats and 36 tables.

The notice to appear in the Official Journal of the European Communities was sent to the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities in 15/05/97.

The contract conditions may be requested by fax before 30/06/97 sent for the attention of the Equipment Service, BAK Building, Room 467 at L-2929 Luxembourg.

Fax No. (352) 4300 4918 quoting reference 'A. O salles de réunion'.

The deadline for the submission of tenders is 24/07/97.

Company annual reports rarely err on the side of modesty, but which do you suppose trumpeted the boast that: "Our board is a unique collection of talent and expertise?"

It was Camelot which felt it necessary to assure people that it was not being run by a collection of dim amateurs. There, above the happy smiling mugshots of the thirteen men and one woman who make up the board of the lottery operator, is the company's somewhat biased verdict on the assembled gang.

That was in last year's report. This year the directors may struggle to find a tribute to themselves sufficient to justify the 40 per cent pay rise they have just pocketed between them.

It is not that the total bill of £2.3 million is out of line for a company with profits of more than £70 million. The problem is that those profits have fallen as the directors' pay has risen. Worse still, the purse that Camelot has distributed to good causes has actually shrunk by more than £180 million. So shareholders, and that group of interested parties we are now obliged to refer to as stakeholders, might have reason to feel aggrieved.

Luckily for the lugubrious Tim Holley, Camelot's generously remunerated chief executive, and his colleagues,

there will be no call to justify their pay packages in front of an antagonistic annual meeting. Camelot's five shareholders are all corporate entities - Cadbury Schweppes, De La Rue, JCL, Rascal Electronics, and GTECH - whose own, well-remunerated, directors understand the realities of commercial life.

They will argue that Camelot executives have had to work jolly hard to maintain enthusiasm for the lottery against growing competition from increasingly aggressive pools operators, betting shops and the plethora of scratch cards other than their own, and that they have done extremely well against the performance targets they were set.

Maybe. But to outsiders, the National Lottery still looks like a monopoly and the chaps who run it resemble a bunch of greedy schoolboys let loose in the tuck shop.

The problem may be one of perception, but Camelot has proved peculiarly incompetent at dealing with its public relations. But why should the directors worry? They know that Camelot's monopoly is to come to an end in a couple of years. Whoever the Government decides should

be the next National Lottery operator - Richard Branson, it could be you - it will certainly not be Camelot.

Nonetheless, if the shareholders are serious in their avowed intention of building a long-term future for the company, operating lotteries elsewhere in the world, they should be aware that public perception will be important.

Good causes first: snouts in trough, second.

Getting the measure of M Arnault

Monsieur Bernard Arnault, owner of a clutch of French fashion houses, has much in common with those who wear his chic, tres cher, outfits. He does not like to be ignored.

His latest intervention in the cosy drinks party being enjoyed by Guinness and Grand Metro-

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

politan should be seen in that light. And with his own annual meeting to address in Paris today, it will do him no harm to appear in fighting form.

His demands for £1 billion to win his approval for the deal are not being taken seriously by the two components of GMG. But that is not to say the deal will sail to completion. The regulatory obstacles to this get together should not be underestimated, and there are companies with far more muscle than M Arnault's who will be doing their best to have it vetoed.

The competition authorities in the United States will be able to effectively put the merger on ice for many months when they begin to investigate the scale of the companies' joint penetration of the spirits market, particularly whisky.

In Brussels, the authorities are already looking for submissions from competitors who object to the hefty slug of the market

which the merged outfit would enjoy.

The scale of the deal means that Brussels takes first bite at examining it rather than our own competition authorities. But that does not mean that the interventionist Mrs Beckett, happily ennobled as President of the Board of Trade, will not take a look. And if, as seems very likely, she takes the view that any takeover which adversely affects competition should be able to justify proceeding on the grounds of public interest, Guinness and GrandMet may find themselves in extremely rocky terrain.

The bulk of the job cuts which constitute an important part of the deal will fall in Britain. Finding the public interest in that could stretch the talents of the most skilled competition lawyers.

By comparison with the problems ahead, M Arnault takes on the stature of a minor irritation.

He is obviously determined that he should not wave through the deal without gaining particular advantage. If, as some suspect, his co-operation could be achieved with the simple measure of GMG buying his controlling stake in Mott & Chandon, that could be organised.

Mrs Beckett could prove harder to pacify.

Allderstatesman of the market

The department store has been resurrected by the media more often than Elvis Presley. In fact, as the John Lewis Partnership has consistently demonstrated, the customers' appetite for this particular form of retailing never died. Some store operators, however, came perilously close to killing off their own versions of the format. House of Fraser being one notable example and still looking distinctly sickly.

The flashy flotation of Harvey Nichols is off-cited as evidence that department store retailing is back in fashion, but in truth, that emporium is a fashion store, albeit on a grand scale. But the stock market enthusiasm for

Harvey Nicks has inspired Sears to seek salvation in the flotation of Selfridges, a genuine department store, with plans to expand beyond its Oxford Street base out into the provinces.

Selfridges is expected to attract a heady rating when it makes its stock market debut, probably late next year. Yet there is already one pure department store group on the stock market with a share price that could hardly be called glamorous.

Alders yesterday produced a doubling in first-half profits. Its stores may not cater for Edina and Patsy, but they appear to be satisfying a fair number of customers. It sold its duty free business while there was still something to sell, and is now still hungry to buy more stores. When Selfridges does make a sparkling, and expensive, stock market debut, Alders may enjoy a little reflected glamour.

Tiny terror

ROLAND Tiny Roland is back in battling mood. That is good news for newspaper advertising departments, the Royal Mail and all those who enjoy a spirited spat. The core of the argument is a secondary issue to Mr Roland's enthusiasm for the fight and his financial ability to carry it out on a grand scale. The French electrical retailer, saw a 0.2 per cent fall in like-for-like sales. Tony Shiret, retail analyst at BZW, raised his full-year forecast for Kingfisher from £440 million to £445 million.

Moss Bros, the menswear group that includes the Savoy Tailors Guild and Blazer, told its annual meeting that in the first 16 weeks of the current year, total sales are 27 per cent ahead while like-for-like turnover is up 4 per cent. Neil Benson, chairman, said "the busy months that traditionally end the financial year next January are ahead of us." His buoyant tone sent Moss Bros shares 17½p higher to £14.15.

cent and, including the stores bought from Norweb Retail, sales rose 34.2 per cent. Superdrug had 6.3 per cent like-for-like sales growth and Woolworths had 6.2 per cent. Darty, the French electrical retailer, saw a 0.2 per cent fall in like-for-like sales.

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Tempos, page 28

Thorn sets aside £17m to meet likely US damages

By PAUL DURMAN

THORN, owner of the Radio Rentals chain, has set aside £17.1 million to cover the cost of the damages it may have to pay after losing a legal action in Minnesota in the US.

The Minnesota action is one of a series in which Thorn's Rent-A-Center chain is accused of charging an unfair rate of interest in its rental purchase agreements. Mike Metcalf, Thorn's chief executive, said that the company is spending "millions" defending the class actions.

Thorn said the Minnesota provision represents the upper limit of the amount it may be told to pay and represents five or six times the annual turnover of Rent-A-Center's eight Minnesota stores. The company has exhausted the appeals process on liability and

can now only contest the size of the damages award.

Mr Metcalf said Thorn has legal advice that the Minnesota judgment will not undermine the battles it is fighting in Wisconsin, Texas and elsewhere. He said the problem in Minnesota was that state legislation failed to distinguish properly between rental-purchase and straight-forward credit agreements.

The legal setback was only one of many in Thorn's first annual results since it demerged from Thorn EMI last August. Thorn profits edged ahead by only £300,000, to £171 million, and it suffered severe problems in Radio Rentals and Rent-A-Center.

Thorn's shares have slumped from just above 390p to 150p in the last nine months.



Metcalf: legal setback

Yesterday it attempted effectively to "return value" to shareholders by buying back 687 million of shares, equivalent to 14.3 per cent of Thorn's opening market capitalisation. By issuing a new class of B shares to existing share-

holders and then buying them back. Thorn hopes to be able to treat private investors on the same basis as institutions. Straightforward buybacks favour institutional investors.

The transaction will push Thorn's debts above £280 million, or 75 per cent of net assets. However, the company remains confident of cashflow and its financial strength. Thorn intends to pay a final dividend of 9.6p on October 3, which increases the total payout by 2.3 per cent to 13.3p a share.

Radio Rentals suffered an 11 per cent fall in operating profits to £76.2 million, not helped by an unsuccessful, and now abandoned, move into furniture. Thorn has closed 90 of its smaller stores to cut costs.

Tempos, page 28

WEW shares slide on new warning

WEW, the discount stores group, issued its second profit warning in a month yesterday, sending its shares skidding nearly 14 per cent to a year's low of 15.5p (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The Glasgow company said that trading conditions have deteriorated further since its last warning, on April 28, when it said second-half pre-tax profit would be "broadly neutral". It is now expecting a pre-tax loss of £2 million for the year.

It said that expected exceptional gains from profit disposals were not now likely to be fully realised this year. The board is reviewing the pace of the conversion of its 73 old-style stores to the new look, named "The Store", which so far is in seven outlets. It is expected to speed up the conversion programme.

Kingfisher and Moss Bros strike note of optimism

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

KINGFISHER and Moss Bros, the retail groups, both reported good news from the high street yesterday.

The Kingfisher group, which includes Woolworths, Superdrug, B&Q and Comet, said at its annual meeting that in the first quarter of this year sales have remained as buoyant as last year. Total sales in the 13 weeks to May 3 were up 10.1 per cent, while like-for-like sales were up 8 per cent. Last year, total sales were up 10.1 per cent and like-for-like sales up 7.4 per cent.

Kingfisher shares, which have risen from a low of 604½p in December, closed at 721½p, 1½p higher on the day but 2p short of their 12-month high.

Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, chief executive, sought to dampen any excesses of enthusiasm: "Whilst encouraging, it is only



Mulcahy: note of caution

the first quarter and too early to start drawing conclusions as Kingfisher is heavily dependent on the second half. What is certain is that our markets remain very competitive."

B&Q, the DIY market leader, enjoyed a 14.4 per cent increase in like-for-like sales. Comet sales were up 10.4 per

cent and, including the stores bought from Norweb Retail, sales rose 34.2 per cent. Superdrug had 6.3 per cent like-for-like sales growth and Woolworths had 6.2 per cent. Darty, the French electrical retailer, saw a 0.2 per cent fall in like-for-like sales.

Tempos, page 28

Compass expanding US food operations

By OLIVER AUGUST

COMPASS, the food services group, is expanding its US division with the \$195 million acquisition of Daka International, which provides a food service to American schools and colleges.

Mike Bailey, chief executive of Compass Group US, said that the acquisition would allow Compass to grow its position as a leading food service provider in the US education market. According to the group the sector is estimated to be worth about \$21 billion a year.

The group will pay \$85 million in cash through an offer of \$7.50 per share, and

\$110 million will be used to repay Daka debt. Compass, which is paying the \$195 million out of existing cash reserves, will eventually merge Daka with its US subsidiary.

Daka, which has been in the food service business for 20 years, operates 710 accounts in 34 American states. Education contracts represent around 73 per cent of its turnover with the rest being business and industry contracts.

Daka also owns two high street retail businesses. They will be demerged to Daka's existing shareholders and are not included in the offer.

Biotech research chief steps down

By PAUL DURMAN

PETER LEWIS, director of research and development at British Biotech for the past five years, is leaving the board to take a part-time role.

Dr Lewis's departure continues the break-up, over the past two years, of the senior team that turned British Biotech into Britain's biggest and potentially most exciting biotechnology company.

A British Biotech spokesman said that Dr Lewis wanted to spend more time in France, where his wife and one of his sons lives. He will continue to advise on Zaccutax and Marimastat, the pancreaticitis and cancer drugs. The

changes also reflect the changing emphasis at British Biotech as it moves from research towards commercialisation.

Dr Lewis's deputy, Alan Drummond, becomes research director and the company will appoint a separate development director.

Dr Lewis, 53, made about £1.5 million when he cashed in share options shortly after the first strongly positive results on marimastat in late 1995. He still owns options worth about £1.35 million.

The shares rose 4½p to 260p yesterday, valuing the company at about £1.7 billion.

Pub grub restores brewer

By FRASER NELSON

DEMAND for pub grub helped Wolverhampton & Dudley, Britain's largest regional brewer, to return to growth in the first half, helped by the success of its food-led houses.

A series of discounts and promotions in its town centre pubs helped pre-tax profits to strengthen to £18.5 million, up from £18.2 million, in the 26 weeks to March 30, in spite of a 4 per cent sales slowdown.

David Miller, chairman, said margins in the second half would be much stronger after the price increase of 5p per pint four weeks ago, combined with a more modest expenditure plan. The results were helped by £259,000 from property disposals and a first-time contribution of £66,000 from Mercury Taverns.

Total beer and cider volumes jumped 8 per cent over the period, although Mr Miller said there was no discernible improvement in general trading conditions. Analysts forecast the company will make £47.2 million (£43.3 million) in the full year.

Earnings nudged ahead to 19.2p (18.7p) after an interim dividend of 6.6p (6p). The shares held at 646½p.

Got any coming to you?

Gallagher Group plc
Halifax plc
Norwich Union plc
Woolwich plc

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| BANKING DIRECT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Gross % ¹ |
| £250,000 and above | 5.84 |
| £25,000 to £249,999 | 5.50 |
| £10,000 to £24,999 | 4.75 |
| £5,000 to £9,999 | 4.00 |
| Less than £5,000 | 3.25 |

| BANKING DIRECT INSTANT ACCESS SAVINGS ACCOUNT | |
|---|----------------------|
| | Gross % ¹ |
| £10,000 and above | 6.00 |
| £5,000 to £9,999 | 5.50 |
| £500 to £4,999 | 4.75 |

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Halifax shares race to 740p on grey market

THE Halifax stock market flotation looked to exceed even the most optimistic forecasts, with the shares racing up 30p to close at 740p on the grey market.

It now looks as though some institutions may be prepared to bid up to 850p for stock ahead of the start of official dealings on Monday. It all bodes well for the Halifax's 7.6 million members, who on average will receive 310 shares worth £2.34.

On Tuesday almost two million, or 23 per cent, of them chose to sell their shares, providing a £4 billion windfall for the economy. It now looks as if the group will be valued at between £18 billion and £20 billion, catapulting it into the list of top ten biggest companies in Britain.

The issue looks like topping the Alliance & Leicester, down 4p at 623p, which started life at 522p and has been as high as 639p.

The equity market gave up an early lead as investors continued to reflect on further losses for gilts and a mixed batch of corporate news. The FT-SE 100 index, up almost 24 points at one stage, closed 4.1 down at 4,677.5 in low turnover of 673 million shares.

A possible delay to their proposed £20 billion-plus merger with Guinness 14p lower at 582p and Grand Metropolitan 15p off at 581p.

The proposed share buy-back programme gave a much needed boost to Thorn, 6p dearer at 150p. The shares have fallen from 395p since the demerger with EMI Group, which hardened 3p to £11.76 after the poor response to Tuesday's profits news.

Anglian Water kicked off the dividend season for the water companies with full-year figures at the top end of expectations and news of an agreed £19.5 million agreed bid for Hartlepool Water. The shares slipped 1p to 681p.

United Utilities, reporting later today, rose 8p to 709p, while Yorkshire Water, reporting on Friday, was 1p cheaper at 376p. South West Water also rose 6p to 695p, away from Thames 7p to 680p. Hartlepool leapt 62p to 257p in response to the bid from Anglian as speculative buying among the small water companies saw Bristol 20p better at £11.65, South Staffordshire 52p higher at £28.30, Cambridge 5p better at 242p, and



David Thompson, left, and Ralph Findlay, of W&DB

Dec Valley Group 10p up at 427p.

Smiths Industries firmed 5p to 768p as brokers resumed their tour of the group's operations. Smiths is a big supplier to Boeing and a positive picture is emerging.

Rolls-Royce rallied 3p to 246p after the group confirmed it had identified a gearbox problem on its Trent 700 engine which led to the

grounding of a number of Airbus A330 aircraft.

Harris & Crossfield, where there has been talk of a demerger, jumped 10p to 119p. Two directors have picked up a total of 485,000 shares at prices of 110p and 114p.

Celltech, the biotech company, rose 4p to 338p as the group took a positive line on prospects. Only last week the group saw its share price

halved on the failure of its septic shock treatment during phase three trials. Now Celltech is now pinning its hopes on a cancer treatment in co-operation with American Home Products.

Its second profits warning in less than two months left W&W Group, the retailer, nursing a fall of 2p at a new low of 151p, roughly half of what they were in October.

Kingfisher raised sales 10.1 per cent to £1.36 billion during the 13 weeks to May 3. That compares with a similar increase in sales for the whole of last year. After their recent strong run the shares put on only 1p at 721p.

Alders responded to a doubling in first half pre-tax profits to £16 million and an upbeat trading statement with a rise of 1p to 215p. A 4 per cent increase in like-for-like sales was good for a rise of 17p to £14.15 at Moss Bros.

Breweries, where David Thompson is managing director, and Ralph Findlay finance director, marked time at 646p after recording a modest increase in half-year pre-tax profits. But the group was confident of "substantially" improved margins in the second half on the back of a 5p a pint price increase and lower revenue spending.

Hepworth has become the latest casualty of a strong pound. Shareholders were told it could cost the group up to £9 million this year. The shares fell 4p to 254p.

■ GILT-EDGED: Prices suffered further losses in early trading, but closed off the bottom with the help of firmer US Treasury bonds and the denial that Hans Tietmeyer was to resign as the Bundesbank president.

Brokers reported switching out of the ten-year range and into longer dated issues. In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt finished a couple of ticks easier at £112.16. Turnover grew to 125,000 contracts as investors rolled over 60,000 contracts into the September series.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 lost £1.4 at £107.16, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was a tick lighter at £102.11.

■ NEW YORK: Shares lacked a clear direction, with advances and declines matched on both exchanges. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 2.15 points lower at 7,381.26.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 7381.26 (-2.15)
S&P Composite 849.87 (-0.18)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 20351.34 (+40.45)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 14556.48 (+16.32)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 804.95 (+1.18)

Sydney:
ASX 2585.2 (+6.3)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3636.42 (-37.96)

Singapore:
Straits 2084.36 (-11.63)

Brussels:
General 1295.39 (+16.63)

Paris:
CAC-40 2583.17 (-97.17)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 1077.0 (+3.4)

London:
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TEMPUS

Less boring banks

THE boring old banks are achieving astonishing valuations and causing bears to fret. The sector is valued at almost 15 times anticipated earnings for the current year, close to the market multiple. Add to that the frantic pursuit of Halifax shares, which may be valued at more than 16 times forecast earnings, and you have a sector that is heading for a fall.

Not true. First, Halifax is not as expensive as it may seem. Strip some £3.8 billion in surplus funds from its overweight balance sheet and the adjusted earnings multiple is just over 14 times. That still looks pricey when compared with the single digit ratings of the banks back in the 1980s, but there has been a shift in perception of these institutions and of the environment in which they operate.

In the 1980s and early 1990s the banks were

still in thrall to problem-country debt and latterly to commercial property lending. Today, banks are shifting their capital into the consumer market with the best of the pack, focused on mortgage lending, a tightly focused market where statistical risk is lower and margins higher than in large-scale syndicated loans. The change in perception is reflected in valuations with the mortgage-hungry Lloyds TSB enjoying a premium rating while NatWest is at the bottom of the heap, weighed down with its investment banking and securities focus. Banks have not become immune to economic cycles, but the continuing call of staff and branch closures makes them less sensitive to margin pressure. And the cycle seems to be working in their favour. Bank fortunes track the long gilt market fairly closely and prices at the long end are falling.

Thorn

THORN is promising its shareholders another "challenge" year in 1997. Many will believe that the loss of 60 per cent of their capital in Thorn's first year as an independent company was challenge enough.

The rental company faces a host of problems. Radio Rentals in the UK and Rent-A-Center in the US both begin the year with a reduced customer base. In Britain the rise in insurance premiums will effectively increase prices, while in America, the threat from the \$100 TV makes it difficult for Thorn to put together a competitive rental deal.

Thorn is still spending "millions" in legal battles in the US courts, and has lost badly in Minnesota. And then it is hit by sterling.

Thorn's response is piece-

Anglian Water

ANGLIAN's overseas activities have been disappointing, to say the least. This year, the operating loss grew to £6.1 million, from £5.7 million in the previous year. Exceptional charges have eaten up £18.8 million, including £7.3 million from the Brazilian operations and £2.8 million in the Czech Republic. Some £8.7 million disappeared in restructuring charges and other costs.

Rationalisation is in hand with the appointment of Tony Eckford as managing director of the international division. Mr Eckford came from the same position in Thames Water, a company bitterly aware of the hazards of international expansion, as its former chief executive could testify.

Anglian has now decided to become more focused. However, its focus is still wider than many would consider. It is "focusing" on North America, Panama and Australasia.

Anglian has pledged that

Kingfisher

ANY DOUBTS about whether Kingfisher's recent good form was just a flash in the pan should have been dispelled by yesterday's trading statement. With the exception of the French laggard, Darty, Kingfisher was again firing on all cylinders.

B&Q led the way with a 14.4 per cent increase in like-for-like sales. The do-it-yourself market has staged a remarkable turnaround, and as the DIY market surges ahead, B&Q is still leading the way.

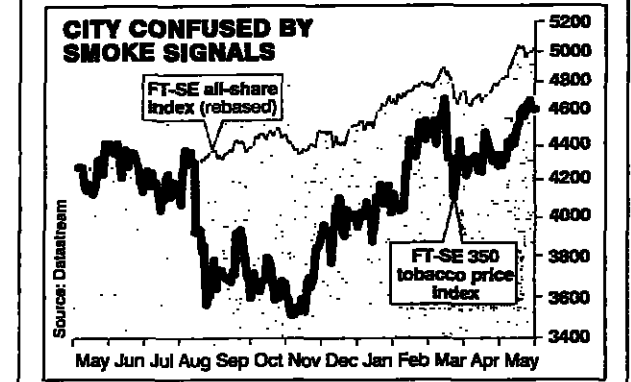
Comet continues to recover, with a 10.4 per cent increase in like-for-like sales

and further gains made with the addition of the Norwex Retail outlets.

Superdrug also showed gains, but Woolworths, where management changes are due in the autumn, suffered a disappointing slowdown in like-for-like sales growth. If Kingfisher has a problem, it will be in maintaining the momentum at Woolworths beyond the current buoyant consumer environment. That will require not only discipline but some imaginative retailing, a skill that Kingfisher has not held in abundance in the past.

Darty still spoils the picture, but some of the blame for the French retailer's 15.1 per cent fall in total sales may be placed on the strong pound and the French recession. Kingfisher shares are near a 12-month high, but, with UK consumers still in spending mode, it is worth hanging on for more growth at B&Q and recovery at Comet.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED



The disposal by the Florida State Board of Administration of \$830 million (£518 million) of tobacco stocks that make up its \$62 billion pension portfolio hit BAT Industries, 3p down at 560p, and Imperial Tobacco, 10p off at 386p. It came just a couple of days before Gallaher makes its stock market return.

Florida's tobacco holdings, of which 75 per cent is held in Philip Morris, account for 13 per cent of its total portfolio. Florida is one of 30 American states suing tobacco companies to recover money spent treating Medicaid patients with smoking-related illnesses.

But Jerry Gallagher at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson says that the move is unlikely to hinder the Gallagher float tomorrow. "The market has just read it wrong," he said. "It's not a fundamental problem. Florida is not the first state to sue tobacco holdings. You can't have a situation where Florida sues the tobacco companies, but continues to hold their stock in its portfolio." The fall in Imps was more likely to reflect Gallagher's flotation, he added.

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The measure of inflation

From Mr Adrian Cocker. Sir, You report in your Business Section (May 12) that the Government is planning a review of the way in which unemployment statistics are collected. This is to be welcomed, as the credibility of those figures as a useful guide to the performance of the economy is very weak after the 30 or so changes in their compilation since 1979.

But should the Government not also announce an independent review of the way inflation is measured, given the present inordinate importance to our economy of an arbitrarily chosen inflation target?

The current targeted rate, "underlying inflation", while properly ignoring the effect of interest changes, includes the impact of changes in indirect and local taxes, which have nothing to do with inflation, ignores changes in the prices of houses, the biggest asset most of us ever buy, and takes inadequate account of changes in the pattern of consumer spending and of price changes that reflect improvements in the quality of goods.

With the enormous power the Bank of England now has to determine all our futures, we should be sure it is aiming at the right target.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN COCKER,
Head of Economics,
The Knights Templar School,
Park Street,
Baldock,
Hertfordshire.

Credit unions an alternative

From the Reverend Anthony G. J. Irwin. Sir, I refer to the report in The Times (May 13) concerning Provident Financial's £100 million shares buyback.

How can anyone with a conscience invest in a company which takes advantage of the poorest of our citizens with exorbitant interest charges on its loans?

It is a great pity that clients could not have been guided to a credit union, if there was one in their area, where the maximum interest charged on a loan is fixed at 1 per cent by law. An APR of 12.68 per cent per year. The interest charge on a £100 loan will only amount to £6.50, with no hidden costs. That compares rather favourably with Provident's flat rate of 50 per cent, where a loan for £100 would incur a minimum repayment of £59 in interest.

There are over 600 credit unions in this country, which also encourage people to save. Credit unions are owned by its members, the borrowers and savers, who are its shareholders.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY G. J. IRWIN,
22 Gleadfield,
Churchdown,
Kingsbridge,
Devon.



Going for gold with Gromit: Jeff Taylor, left, and Peter Phippen, who are harnessing the BBC's output to generate new income to fund programmes

All the world's a stage for BBC's mine of material

Auntie needs to repackage popular programmes as cash-winning global bestsellers, says Eric Reguly

The BBC, taking its cue from McDonald's and Coca-Cola, the masters of global marketing, is embarking on a plan to ensure that no corner of the Earth is free of BBC-branded channels, magazines, books, tapes and CDs.

The multimedia effort is being directed by BBC Worldwide, the BBC's commercial arm, which is under pressure to develop a stream of profits to supplement the increasingly inadequate £1.8 billion income from the annual licence fee. This week's appointment of Carolyn Fairbairn, a former senior member of the Downing Street policy unit, as BBC Worldwide's director of strategy, is designed to speed up the global campaign.

Noddy is a good example of the path that BBC Worldwide wants to take. The children's favourite, which the BBC has on licence from the Enid Blyton company, has been exported around the world in almost every medium imaginable. In Britain, he is the star of a 39-episode animation series that has been spun off into Noddy books, audio tapes and CDs. He has his own television series in France, where he is known as "Oui Oui". In Japan, the BBC has formed a partnership with Sony to market Noddy in television, video and book form. In the US, he will appear in a 26-part television series produced jointly with the Public Broadcasting System.

BBC Worldwide has also turned the man-and-dog duo of Wallace and Gromit into international celebrities. Americans bought 1.1 million Wallace and Gromit videos last year, making them bestsellers.

Top Gear, the successful television programme that spawned a magazine of that name three years ago, may be next. The BBC's new joint venture with Discovery, one of America's largest programme-makers, could turn Top Gear into an international product, with cable and satellite programmes in the US and other

markets in which Discovery operates, notably Latin America. Magazines, videos and CD-Roms could be spun off.

Nicholas Chapman, managing director of publishing and multimedia for BBC Worldwide, said: "Top Gear has distinctive voice and brand equity. I see it as an international brand for petrolheads."

It has become a cliché to point out that the BBC is one of the best-known brand names in the world, especially in the bits that were once coloured pink. However, the BBC name is also considered massively underexploited, a treasure chest waiting to be mined.

As the BBC's finances come under pressure, new ways must be found to supplement the licence fee. This means trawling the portfolio of products, from Delia Smith books to tapes of Alan Bennett reading Winnie the Pooh, to determine which ones, in which formats, will boost income through greater UK and international exposure. Profits from these products are returned to the BBC, which ploughs the money into programming and bidding for sports coverage. Lack of funds last year cost the BBC the right to broadcast Formula One racing and the FA Cup.

Creating BBC-themed subscription channels is only part of the job. Dozens of subscription channels are set to be launched through joint ventures with Flextech, Britain's second-biggest source of cable and satellite programming, and Discovery. The non-television divisions of BBC Worldwide — consumer publishing, which includes books, videos, the radio collection and character licensing — are also being overhauled to boost their profile and profitability. The effort is taking place in a warren of drab offices in

White City, the BBC's west London outpost. The key men are Chapman, Jeff Taylor, the director of consumer publishing, and Peter Phippen, director of BBC magazines. All three have had careers in the commercial world. Taylor, a 36-year-old New Zealander, is the newest recruit. Until last year, he was Sony's European marketing manager for consumer video products.

The trio is broadly responsible for a collection of businesses that reported sales of £200 million in the year to March 31, up 7 per cent on the previous year. They contributed £28 million in profits, up 17 per cent, to the BBC. Stronger magazine performance was behind the growth: sales fell in the consumer publishing business, largely because of a downturn in the video market and the lack of another hot Delia Smith title.



Clarkson: multimedia

Taylor's goal is to launch products in every media format and sell them in Britain and around the world. His model is PolyGram, the music and entertainment group that

has one of the most extensive distribution networks in the world. Noddy and Wallace and Gromit are the most successful examples of the formula so far.

Taylor, of course, is fighting the BBC's aggressively non-commercial culture, and recasting Auntie into a corporate athlete will take some time. One project near fruition is putting BBC kiosks — free-standing BBC shops, in effect — into hundreds of WH Smith and Tesco outlets. The units would sell books, videos, toys, tapes and the like. Taylor believes that the free-standing approach could increase sales of BBC products by as much as 400 per cent in the stores.

There are also plans for American kiosks, which may find homes in Discovery retail outlets, among others.

The magazine division is in better shape, though its profit margins are not up to industry standards. The business has undergone remarkable growth. Until ten years ago, the newest BBC magazine was The Listener, launched in 1929 (it survived until the late 1980s). Seventeen new magazines have been created since then, making the BBC the third-largest magazine publisher, behind IPC and Emap. Its titles include Good Food, Gardeners' World, Homes and Antiques, Top of the Pops, Girl Talk, Wildlife and Radio Times. Britain's top magazine by advertising revenue.

Cross-promotion is the name of the game, and Top Gear is the best example. It is a programme presented by Jeremy Clarkson — a magazine and a radio show. It is available in video, CD, and book form and on the Internet. There is also a Top Gear exhibition. Each format promotes the others, strengthening the brand image across the

range. Phippen said: "Our belief is that the future of media marketing is the creation of cross-media brands."

Emap and IPC have accused the BBC of having an unfair advantage, and this is so. The BBC has the right to use BBC programmes such as Top Gear and Gardeners' World to promote related products and magazines.

Phippen says that he would like to double the number of BBC-branded magazines in the next ten years. Three magazine launches are planned in the next year, and titles in science, news and current affairs, the women's market and personal finance are being explored.

The launch of the BBC channels with Flextech and Discovery takes cross-promotion to a higher plateau. "Satellite channels offer a lot of new opportunities for cross-media brands," Phippen said. "Increasingly, the TV marketplace will look like the magazine marketplace."

One of the BBC-Flextech channels, called Arena, which will cover the arts world, is an obvious candidate for a magazine of the same name. Explorer, the proposed name of a BBC-Discovery wildlife and travel channel in America, could also spawn a magazine.

In the end, the BBC Worldwide team hope that the BBC becomes a truly global brand. And wouldn't it be nice, for a change, to hear Americans complain about the ubiquity of British culture?

Business chiefs poised to sign up for defence review service

Oliver August on who might answer Labour's call to arms

Labour ministers seem eager to outdo their leader in acquiring high-profile business buddies. George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, is the latest to be poring over the CBI membership list.

Yesterday he announced his long-awaited defence review, which could easily degenerate into what analysts are calling "the mother of all procurement battles".

There is little sense in conducting such a tortuous exercise if it is not going to result in highly controversial decisions. Mr Robertson said: "We will look at all of our programmes." Only the nuclear deterrent will be excluded.

To find as many allies as possible before any bombshells are dropped at the end of the review in December, Mr Robertson is assembling a panel of experts to advise him. Senior British industrialists will receive their invitations soon.

The undisputed front-runner is George Simpson, the GEC chief executive. Over the past few months, he has tirelessly made known his pro-Labour credentials. As an experienced defence industry insider, he participated in the Labour-inspired Business Commission.

Of course, Mr Simpson's group is also Britain's most diversified defence business, making products from warships to aircraft electronics. Peter Gershon is the managing director of GEC-Marconi, the defence arm. He has been mentioned as another potential candidate.

Executives at Rolls-Royce are also likely to be near the top of the list. The group has finally stopped giving money to the Conservative Party. While Sir Ralph Robbins, the chairman, still looks like a Tory patrician, new Labour should feel more than comfortable with John Rose, the young and congenial chief executive.

Invitations may also reach LucasVarity, Smith Industries, GKN and Vespene Thornycroft. British Aerospace, an industry leader, would seem another obvious participant. Its Eurofighter aircraft is one of Mr Robertson's top priorities.

But doubts have been voiced about the likelihood of Sir Richard Evans, the no-nonsense BAE chief executive, joining the panel. One defence insider said: "He is too outspoken." Yesterday, BAE said only that it might make its own written submission to the MoD. Another concern regarding Sir Richard is his involvement in worldwide arms sales, which could limit his availability. If the review is to be completed this year, members will have to work harder than Martin Taylor, the Barclays chief executive who will spend one or two days a month at the Department for Social Security.

Lord Gilbert, the Defence Procurement Minister, suggested unions should also be heard during the review. Defence insiders had little doubt which trade unionist would join the panel.

Jack Dromey, husband of Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, is a leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union with extensive experience of the job losses defence cuts can cause. But a rival candidate could emerge from the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union. John Speller, Mr Robertson's Under-Secretary, has a strong link with the AEEU as a former officer.

But will this mighty group of industrialists and trade unionists have much say over the final result? Mr Robertson said: "No one should be able to claim at the end of the review that they were not given the opportunity to have their say." Presumably, he means that if one has had an input then one cannot complain about the outcome. Such logic is infantile.

George Simpson and others will gear up to defend projects in which their companies are involved. Labour knows that. The new-found love of business will not cloud Treasury judgment when it is looking for savings to avoid tax rises. And Mr Robertson's panel will be dwarfed by a Commons majority of 179 MPs.

The experts can hope only that he can still remember his own words in six months' time. He said: "Making sure this country has got a good and competitive defence industry is something this Government has a considerable interest in and will make a priority."

Horlick mix

A NEW light has been cast on the decision by John Richards to team up with his buddy Nicola Horlick to create a new investment management business at Societe Generale.

Richards, who was a director of Mercury Asset Management's main operating company, headed the team that managed a £3.8 billion fund that came seventh out of 71 funds in a recent report from CAPS, the performance measuring firm. Only Scottish Amicable did worse. Richards and Mercury were not helped by moving nearly 7 per cent of



"The main thing is at least our profits haven't dried up"

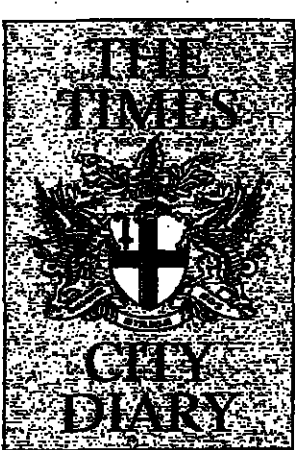
the fund into cash. Thankfully, most of the rest of the funds that make up Mercury's £90 billion, seem to have outpaced the Richards fund.

Mercury insiders say the loss of Richards, who is godfather to one of La Horlick's five children, has caused a lot of internal consternation. Watch for more fallout.

Bell tolls

POOR Sir Tim Bell. No sooner has he spent £850,000 acquiring a new political lobbying team for his company, Chime Communications, than he has been hit by a spate of defections. Jon Mendelsohn, a former head of the Union of Jewish Students who was in charge of strategy and rebuttal for Tony Blair until the election, has tempted Neal Lawson, deputy managing director of Lowe Bell Political, and Ben Lucas, Lowe Bell's leading Labour consultant, to join him in a new lobbying group. So has Sir Tim, the arch Tory, lost most of his Labour connections? "Try all his Labour connections," Mendelsohn says smugly.

ON THE subject of Sir Tim, he was at SBC Warburg, the merchant banker, for a meet-



ing the other day. Warburg defended the Co-operative Wholesale Society against the bid from Andrew Regan's Galileo, advised by Sir Tim's Lowe Bell Financial. A Warburg Johnny asked Sir Tim to justify this role, to which he replied: "I plead not guilty as I am guilty of a higher crime. At all material times I was trying to get John Major re-elected as prime minister."

Beancounter

A FORMER colleague of Sir Tim is Martin Sorrell, the Napoleon of advertising, who has been musing about his choice of career and the nature and future of creativity. Because he is chief executive of WPP Group, the world's biggest ad-

vertising combine, his musings are inserted in the WPP accounts. He reflects that he is neither a creative nor a suit, but a money man.

"I like counting beans very much indeed. And I find counting a great many corporate beans a lot more satisfactory than counting a very few corporate beans — and I know that because I've tried both." Even more fun, surely, is counting the pile of personal beans Sorrell is amassing as this climbs so remorselessly towards that multi-million pound incentive package.

Scillytunnel

MICHAEL HARDERN, the ace "carpetbagger", who is attempting to get on the board of Nationwide Building Society in order to force it to convert, has a history of being a nuisance to company directors. As a shareholder in the Isles of Scilly Steamship Company, he also tried to get a board position. One of his favoured schemes was a tunnel connecting the Isles of Scilly and the mainland, which would have cost more than the Channel Tunnel. Needless to say his board bid was rejected.

Holley lolly

POOR Tim Holley. Camelot's chief executive, currently on a morale-raising tour of Came-

lot's regional offices in the wake of all those horrible things said by Labour, has never been one to look forward to the annual results, due out early next month. Anyway, imagine his horror yesterday when, waiting for a connection from Glasgow to Camelot's offices in Aintree, word came in that the zealously guarded figures had been leaked to that incisive organ, Marketing Week. Camelot's PR machine spent the day trying to counter the inevitable Fat Cat headlines. Holley, whose package rose 53 per cent to £900,000 last year, according to the leaked figures, did not enjoy better fortune as the day went on. He missed his connection.



Tim Bell's group has been hit by a spate of defections

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FREE ADMISSION

Allders shopping around for more purchases

By Sarah Cunningham

ALLDERS, the department store group that bought eight Owen Owen stores last year, is planning further acquisitions.

Harvey Lipsith, chief executive, said that the new stores contributed £50 million to the £267.6 million sales revenue in the first half of this year. Excluding the new stores, sales were up 13.3 per cent.

The new stores and three of the older Allders branches, at Croydon, Bromley and Portsmouth, are in the middle of a £35 million refurbishment. The group is looking for "either the odd store here or there, or something larger" to buy, Mr Lipsith said.

He said Allders was not interested in any of the House of Fraser stores up for sale. If Littlewoods, the high street chain that is also for sale were sold piecemeal, Allders would be interested in buying some branches, he said.

In the six months to March 31, Allders pre-tax profit doubled to £16 million. Earnings per share, after a share consolidation on May 6, rose from 3.8p to 15p. The interim dividend increases to 3p per new consolidated share, compared with 2.4p per old share. It is payable on August 21.

The company had cash of £17 million at the half-year stage. This will be spent by the year-end on the refurbishing programme, but the group will remain unencumbered. Further acquisitions could be funded from borrowings, or by the issuing new shares, Mr Lipsith said.

Allders shares rose 11p to 215p mainly because of the strong trading figures. In the first seven weeks of this year, like-for-like sales were up 7.2 per cent, but after excluding the timing of the mid-season sales, sales growth was 10.1 per cent.

John Pattison, chairman, said the high rate of growth seen at the start of this year was unlikely to be maintained in the second half. He suggested that the forthcoming Budget, plus the potential for further interest rate increases, might produce uncertainty among consumers. But he said that increased sales from the refurbished stores should begin to show next year.



Looking ahead: Harvey Lipsith, chief executive of Allders, right, with Rod Ivey, finance director, and Stan Kaufman, managing director, centre

Ofgas under fire for allowing Centrica to cut prices by 12%

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

GAS COMPANIES yesterday accused Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, of jeopardising competition after she backed a controversial move by Centrica, the newly named domestic half of British Gas, to cut some of its prices in the South West.

Centrica can now cut its tariffs by 12 per cent for direct debit customers in the South West, the first area where rival companies have been allowed to compete for household busi-

ness. The company started offering the discount earlier this year.

Ofgas says that the approval is only for "the time being". Competitors argue that competition has not been properly established, as Centrica has 80 per cent of the market.

Although Ms Spottiswoode has demanded that Centrica must consult before it implements any other cuts, and that this endorsement is not a precedent for future tariff re-

ductions, it is expected that the company will press for across-the-board price reductions.

Rival companies, who are offering prices up to 25 per cent cheaper than Centrica, believe the concession on prices will encourage customer apathy and threaten competition. Some say that the switch rate halved when Centrica first introduced ValuePlus, its direct-debit discount in the South West.

Neil Lambert, joint manag-

ing director of Calortex, said: "She has bottled out with this decision. We are very disappointed and astonished that when one player has 80 per cent of the market, competition is deemed to have happened. This flies in the face of the regulator's duty to establish true competition."

Ms Spottiswoode, as the regulator, must be satisfied that competition has been achieved before sanctioning price cuts by a former monopolist, but Ms Spottiswoode has never set a target for Centrica's loss of domestic market share.

Caroline Harper, managing director of Amerada Hess, said the decision meant that competition should be set up throughout the country as quickly as possible in spite of arguments from BG, the pipeline half of the demerged British Gas, that its systems may not be ready. "We need to get on with this quickly otherwise no one will have a chance to compete effectively."

A spokesman for Eastern Natural Gas said Centrica should not have been allowed to cut its prices for two years in order to ensure competition would last.

The Gas Consumers Council joined the fray, saying it did not believe that other suppliers had yet won enough market share to sustain competition in the longer term. Two million homes can shop around for their gas in the South West, Dorset, the former Avon area and parts of Kent and Sussex.

The next part of the roll-out programme has been suggested for October, when it would stretch to Scotland and the North East.

Kunick nursing £200,000 charge

By Fraser Nelson

KUNICK, the arcade games to nursing homes group, has run up a £200,000 expenses charge after backing out of an agreed takeover deal at the eleventh hour.

Although the company refused to disclose details, it is understood it had agreed a price for a bolt-on acquisition but pulled out after its auditors disputed financial projections.

The news surprised the City, leaving analysts at a loss to identify the intended target. One said: "It would be folly to

make another games machine acquisition and they could not digest another manufacturing deal. There is no immediate acquisition that would seem to make sense, so the fact that the takeover fell through comes as quite a relief."

The costs of the failed takeover held the company's pre-tax profits at £4.32 million (£4 million) for the six months to March 31 as earnings rose to 0.65p (0.55p) a share. An interim dividend of 0.35p (0.3p) is payable on July 11. Its

French nursing homes division, which is being prepared for disposal, held occupancy rates at 98 per cent while lifting profits 48 per cent.

A modest decline in sales from its French arcade game division was worsened by the strength of the pound, as total profits from France slipped 1 per cent to £934,000.

The UK arcade games division, which supplies pubs run by Whitbread, Allied Domecq and Scottish & Newcastle, was boosted by heavier orders

from the brewers. Relaxation, its leisure centre management division, won orders to look after the sports facilities of a further five English local authorities over the period, bringing the total to 18.

Russell Smith, chief executive, said that many of the new orders were from Labour-controlled authorities.

He added that although about 65 leisure contracts were coming up this year, the division was interested in bidding for only about six of them.

Calling auditors to account

Austin Mitchell says it is high time to end self-regulation in the auditing and insolvency sector

THE Government's early decision to put financial sector regulation on a firm statutory and independent base is particularly welcome because it is so long overdue. It was first proposed by Bryan Gould during the parliamentary passage of the Financial Services Act 1986 and since then the Treasury obsession with self-regulation, chaps regulating chaps, has resulted in a plethora of ineffective, duplicating, wasteful and impotent self-regulating bodies. Despite a decade of scandals, failures and pension mis-selling, they have proved able neither to discipline major companies nor to secure compensation for the public.

At last we have a new start. The revamped Securities and Investments Board (SIB) can become the British equivalent of a Securities Exchange Commission, with teeth, independence and the will to advance and defend consumer rights. Yet those independent regulatory arrangements should be extended to auditing and insolvency. The five competing recognised supervisory bodies for auditing have duplicating structures and committees. Eight regulators deal with 1,900 insolvency practitioners. On top of this are the Joint Disciplinary Scheme (JDS), the Financial Reporting

Council (FRC) empire and the proposed Review Board. Add in the inevitable buck-passing of self-regulation and the endless multiplication of rules, and the result is a mess. The accountability trade associations have neither the will nor the resources to regulate giant multinational accountancy firms. So they have developed an over-elaborate rulebook with numerous exceptions. All of it is incapable of dealing with the big firms though it is excessively macho to small practitioners.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) is supposed to defend consumer interests and the public. Shamelessly, it has supported the demand from the big firms for even more protection from liability claims arising from their negligent performance of their statutory monopoly. Its submission to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) does not say anything about the plight of those who suffer from audit failures.

The accountancy bodies have a history of opposing reform. They have always tried to keep audit privileged and out of regulatory structures. They opposed any need for auditors to detect or report fraud to regulators. They showed a lack of concern for those suffering from



Austin Mitchell lambasts the 'chaps regulating chaps' system

the BCCI, Maxwell and Barlow Clowes debacles. Despite the BCCI frauds, the ICAEW urged Lord Justice Bingham not to force auditors to report fraud to the regulators. He disagreed and a "duty" was imposed.

The DTI inspectors regularly find fault with auditing firms. Yet, every time, the ICAEW imitates the three wise monkeys. It failed to investigate the overall standards of any of the firms implicated in big scandals. In the US, a report on the

audit failures at BCCI was ready within 18 months of the bank's closure. Here, we are still waiting. Though one is promised by the year 2010, there have been no reports on audit failures at Polly Peck, Levin and others.

Numerous complaints about the excesses of insolvency practitioners have been referred to the ICAEW. Television and radio programmes have regularly highlighted the predatory and greedy activities of a number of firms. Yet no regulator either

took action or produced any public report. Lord Justice Mitchell's judgment in the case of *AGIP (Africa) Limited v Jackson & Co* concluded that accountants "knowingly laundered money" through specially created shell companies. The ICAEW claimed that there was "insufficient evidence" and failed to investigate the involvement of big firms. It never explained why its judgment is superior to that of the High Court.

After the Companies Act 1989, accountancy bodies are required to monitor auditors' work. They refuse to name the firms producing poor audits. Anyone selling crisps, sweets or cars has to call back faulty products and compensate consumers. This does not happen in auditing or insolvency. The accountancy bodies now claim that audit monitoring is not concerned with checking audit quality. It is only supposed to check mechanical compliance with auditing standards. The Financial Reporting Review Panel (FRRP) has found fault with audited company accounts and has forced company directors to make public revised accounts. By implication, this also raises questions about the quality of audit work. Some 23 cases have been referred to the ICAEW. It has been unable to get off its benched knee to the big firms in respect of any.

Self-regulation in auditing and insolvency has to go. The end of self-regulation in financial services is the time to do it. Austin Mitchell is Labour MP for Great Grimsby

Reform plans need blast of fresh air

IN THE maelstrom of proposed changes to City regulation it had become hard to see quite where the accountancy profession fitted into the Government's plans. But the waters are clearing: meetings are taking place. And the line that is likely to be taken on the unprecedented appearance of accountancy proposals in the election manifesto for business is emerging.

As the article alongside shows the indefatigable Austin Mitchell, MP, has lost none of his reforming zeal though he is, apparently, not measuring up to what his accounting zealots had presumed would be theirs with a new Labour victory. As Mr Mitchell's wife revealed last weekend she is being deluged with faxes from Professor Prem Sikka, who has long been battling on the reform front and has provided Mr Mitchell with much of his ammunition. In particular, Prem had wanted to know why Mr Mitchell had not been made Minister for Trade and had sent her a questionnaire about it.

But accountancy is still a priority. It is in the manifesto, to which, said, first: "We will ensure there is a framework of independent regulation for the accountancy profession". Fortunately the profession is producing such a framework. But it may not satisfy the Government.

The much-discussed plan sets up an independent review board. But it does not place the Auditing Practices Board (APB) in the most logical place. The transformation of the APB from a body charged with making audit more useful and laying down rules into a political football has been remarkable. And it has resulted in some strange twists of logic.

Financial reporting is policed by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), which has the Accounting Standards Board (ASB) under its wing. The independence of both is widely regarded as being exemplary. Some campaigners would like to see the APB under the FRC wing also. But the profession, except for CIMA, the management accounting body, has tended to see its place under the wing of the proposed review body.

This comes down to arguments about independence. At this point the Department of Trade and Industry joins in. It tends to see the APB's place as being with the FRC. Mr Mitchell, and Professor Sikka, also take that view. It is a strange one. They argue that any regulatory body needs to be far from the

clutches of members of the accountancy profession. Yet no one seems to have taken on board the fact that the FRC, which is seen to be highly independent and the preferred guardian of the APB, is stuffed with accountants, while it is proposed that the new review board should have a majority of non-accountants at all crucial points.

But logic has little to do with these arguments. The hope will be that the Government will not want to go back to the drawing board. The review board proposals would work well enough, with perhaps a bit of tinkering to show that the politicians had not accepted the idea without an argument, and they have the long-stop of a full review of the board's working built into the plans.

The second part of the manifesto commitment was more confusing: "We will review the laws on joint and several liability so that incorporation in this country provides accountants with adequate protection". The point of reviewing the unfair rules on liability was not to provide protection via incorporation but via a system akin to the US where limited liability partnerships are allowed.

When the DTI issued a consultation paper on the issue it seemed to have scooped chunks of corporate law into the proposals. Small wonder that some of it seemed strange when applied to partnerships. In particular, the proposed idea of a "clawback" system seems likely to provide much work for lawyers rather than justice and compensation for creditors.

So it looks as if this might take more time. There is a growing unease at the DTI. All these new regulatory proposals for the City are taking work from its remit into the Treasury and the Securities and Investment Board. They will be more nervous about floating changes.

Despite that, proposals for a UK version of limited liability partnerships would be fairly easy to roll out. But the Government may be holding out for a higher degree of quid pro quo beforehand. And this is where the profession and those in small business. The arguments on fairness and justice for accountants need to be allied with those showing that consumers and business will benefit. It is time for a plethora of initiatives on openness. Otherwise reform will slow to a crawl.



ROBERT BRUCE

Call goes out to alumni

THE large accounting firms have long understood the importance of keeping in touch with their alumni. After all, you never know which unreliable audit student is going to finish up as finance director with a potential client. Arthur Andersen and Price Waterhouse have been particularly active in this field. Andersen plans a party for 1,000 alumni in a marquee in its office court-

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

yard on June 11. So it came as a bit of a surprise to find KPMG taking advertisements in the national press last week with inducements for alumni to phone home. All that was required to qualify for a prize, including a nine-day QE2 cruise to Spain for the Ryder Cup, was to phone in and register. To say that KPMG's competitors are growing in an understatement. They assume

that all internal information systems have broken down.

Open and closed

IT IS one step forward and one back when it comes to openness at CIMA, the management accounting body. It has opened up its council meetings to members, but not to the public. More than 80 per cent of members who responded to

a poll said that non-members should be barred. No one is sure what the editor of *Management Accounting*, the institute's journal, is going to do. Theoretically, he should now be barred. But he has always gone along before.

Cat-like stealth

MEMBERS at the annual meeting of the Association of

Accounting Technicians were somewhat surprised to see Professor Mike Harvey glad-handing his way around the place. After all, he was the representative from the traitorous certified accountants who have pulled out of the second body. People were pointing out that the proposed rival qualification, that of Certified Accounting Technician, was a CAT and like Kipling's version, should have the decency to walk by itself.

ROBERT BRUCE



FILM 1

Clint Eastwood is eyewitness to a murder in his fine new Hollywood thriller, *Absolute Power*



FILM 2

Kicking the habit: friendship blooms where you least expect it in the heroin-inspired comedy *Gridlock'd*

THE TIMES ARTS



FILM 3

A tender regard for human failings — and plenty of exquisite food — makes *Big Night* worth seeing



FILM 4

The cheesy *Turbulence* resurrects every cliché going, but still manages to be enjoyable

CINEMA: Geoff Brown finds Clint Eastwood's retro style perfectly suited to a classic potboiler turned star vehicle

Dial E for Eastwood

At one time Presidents in American movies were considered so august that they could only be depicted as a ray of light, glimpsed through a White House door. Then the Presidents began to have faces: faces you could trust, like Henry Fonda's and Raymond Massey's. Times have changed radically. Anyone can be President now, even Gene Hackman, master of the shifty look and the madly insincere smile.

In *Absolute Power* he enters the story early, playing rough in his mistress's mansion, while her husband, political powerbroker E.G. Marshall, is off in the Bahamas. The noise encourages two Secret Servicemen to burst into her bedroom and shoot her dead. The crime scene is licked clean, except for a letter-opener decorated with blood and fingerprints. There is also a witness: Clint Eastwood.

A veteran burglar, known to the police, he is rifling through the powerbroker's vault in a room with a view of the bedroom beyond. He observes in silence and shadow: a scene carefully controlled, like all others, by Eastwood the director. There is no waste in *Absolute Power*. The images are as lean, clean and functional as those served up by the old masters of Hollywood action, Howard Hawks and Raoul Walsh.

The retro style is not only pleasant. It is also appropriate for a movie that for all its modern noises about the worthlessness of politicians remains at heart a vintage potboiler polished into a star vehicle. The witness to murder who becomes the murderer's new target: this is an old story. The celebrated screenwriter William Goldman, working from a bestselling novel, merely dresses it in fancy clothes.

You also feel the weight of the ages in scenes between the burglar and his estranged daughter, a deputy district attorney, spiritedly played by Laura Linney. "Go to the police. That's what innocent people do," Linney cries, when Eastwood is implicated in the mayhem. But we all know that if he goes to the police, there is no movie.

For there would then be no chance for Eastwood to do what he does best: play the skilled loner who outfoxes opponents, and exudes moral superiority by his walk and talk (not that there's much of the latter). Acknowledging the march of time, Goldman's

Absolute Power
Odeon Leicester Square, 15, 121 mins
Gleaming potboiler from Clint Eastwood

Gridlock'd
Warner West End, 18, 91 mins
Funny times with heroin addicts

Big Night
Warner West End, 15, 109 mins
Prolonged but tasty night at the trattoria

The Spitfire Grill
Warner West End, 12, 116 mins
Unappetising uplift drama

Mon Homme
Lumiere, 18, 89 mins
Bertrand Blier widdles his thumbs

Turbulence
Warner West End, 18, 100 mins
The "Airport" movies live again

script includes jokes about age and pacemakers. Eastwood, 67 on Saturday, tosses them off lightly, for he knows his star power is not under threat.

Other players grab their chances gratefully. We have seen Hackman's oily operator before, but it is still delicious watching him hear the latest bad news from his Chief of Staff, Judy Davis, while they whirl elegantly round the dance floor. The script does its own bit of whirling, and lets improbabilities pile up. We excuse them: a tribute to Eastwood's absolute power, as actor, icon and director.

"I'm thinking about getting a penis implant," It is Tim Roth speaking in that all-purpose American drawl that seems to have replaced his native British accent. A feckless heroin addict and musician called Stretch, he starts the film *Gridlock'd* strung out, although in better shape than Thandie Newton, who gets rushed to hospital in a coma. Roth's other buddy, Spoon by name, played by the late Tupac Shakur, displays more sense, although the pair still try to swindle drug dealers and sell bricks disguised as video cameras.

For a while this film, a first directorial fling by the actor Vondie Curtis Hall, looks like your ordinary tale of urban hell, of splattered heads and souls snuffed out. Then the penny drops. This is a comedy.



Burglar shopped: Clint Eastwood, who directed *Absolute Power*, is at his best as the skilled loner who outfoxes his opponents and exudes moral superiority through his walk

about Stretch and Spoon on New Year's Day, struggling to fulfil a hasty resolution to kick the heroin habit. What gets in the way is bureaucracy: the precise qualifications for a detoxification programme, the art of form-filling and surviving a queue. Police and aggrieved dealers further complicate their life.

As director, Vondie Curtis Hall, best known perhaps as Sugar, the zydeco guitarist in *Passion Fish*, clearly suffers from first-film nerves. He engineers show-off transitions between scenes, then lets the scenes themselves run ragged. But he knows how to control his cast. Rap artist Shakur, shot dead last September shortly after completing this movie, usually played angry black brothers; yet the level-

headed Spoon suits him well. And you sense a real rapport with Roth as they wait and curse in dingy offices, or inflict "pretend" stab wounds to land in hospital. Both performers go a long way to make *Gridlock'd* sharp, funny and likeable: a film that celebrates the flower of friendship blooming where least expected.

Camaraderie is also a theme of *Big Night*, a friendly low-budget venture directed by two more actors, Stanley Tucci (see interview overleaf) and Campbell Scott. This is a tale of two Italian immigrant brothers in late Fifties America, straining to make a success of their restaurant on the New Jersey shore. Primo (Tony Shalhoub), the chef, is an artist in pasta, who refuses to compromise on quality. Younger

brother Secondo (Tucci), the business manager, has a larger itch for success, and eyes with envy the ritzy restaurant down the street, run, inconspicuously, by Ian Holm.

Tucci's script, written with his cousin, Joseph Tropiano, takes its time observing the characters and manoeuvring round the conflicting values of the Old World and the New. The slow pace and intimacy suggest a stage piece; so does the central device of the anticipated guest — the entertainer Lou Prima, invited for the restaurant's "big night" — who never arrives. The film's drawback is its overstretched length and visual timidity. Its virtues include thoughtfulness, and a tender regard for

human failings. Plus, of course, the exquisite food, which is always being talked about, prepared, or consumed. Eat beforehand.

Better book a table with Tucci and Shalhoub than visit *The Spitfire Grill*, a diner in Maine, and an unfortunate magnet for those awkward little dramas that stuff so many meaningful bad films. Alison Elliott, a young woman who she invites him to be her pimp. Once the pimp (Gerard Lanvin) lands in jail, some unlikely social comment snakes through the script, dislodging the outlandish comedy that is Blier's strength. Elderly gents puffing up the stairs to Grinberg's wares: love-making synchronised to the mystical sounds of Gorecki: these are some of the

acts as though it were in a much better film.

So does the troupe in *Mon Homme*, which provides further evidence of Bertrand Blier's urge to shock the bourgeois, play with sexual relationships, and showcase his current muse, Anouk Grinberg. The gannet charm-er plays a happy hooker, so enraptured by sex with a tramp found near her garbage that she invites him to be her pimp. Once the pimp (Gerard Lanvin) lands in jail, some unlikely social comment snakes through the script, dislodging the outlandish comedy that is Blier's strength.

Elderly gents puffing up the stairs to Grinberg's wares: love-making synchronised to the mystical sounds of Gorecki: these are some of the highlights. The cast is sprinkled with notable names, such as Olivier Martinez and Sabine Azéma. But they are never enough to stave off the feeling that Blier is cocking snooks that he has cocked too many times before.

That old familiar feeling looms even stronger in the cheesy but enjoyable *Turbulence*, from TV veteran Robert Butler. This resurrects every cliché last seen cruising at 3,000 feet in the *Airport* movies of the Seventies. Here is the killer, Ray Liotta, who hijacks the 747 jet. Here is bad weather. And here is the flight attendant, Lauren Holly, forced to play pilot when everyone else appears dead. To make matters merrier, it's Christmas. Happy viewing, everybody.

Clint does it again

Every week, young film fans discuss some of the latest releases...

ABSOLUTE POWER
Damian Samuels, 20: The combination of politics, crime and Clint is the perfect mix for a marvellous movie.

Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 18: It gets off to a good start, but it's all downhill from there.

Tim Thornton, 21: Clint does it again in one of the best thrillers for ages.

Sarah Crook, 18: Julie Davis and Ed Harris steal the show.

BIG NIGHT
Damian: Imagine the Gallagher brothers on the set of *Masterchef* and you get the perfect ingredients for a comedy. Leslie: A culinary delight which lacks a little meat. Tim: Fine acting in this witty, entertaining and moving romp. Make sure you eat beforehand because you will come out very hungry.

SNAP VERDICT

Sarah: A dull restaurant-and-relationships film which provided the odd laugh but was very pointless.

THE SPITFIRE GRILL
Damian: American schmaltz. Leslie: A tear-jerking yarn that is more suited to a girlie audience. Tim: *Fried Green Tomatoes* for 1997. Sarah: A wonderfully played film with a gripping performance by Alison Elliott.

Most intelligently handled, funny boy bonding tale since *Drugstore Cowboy*

TIM ROTH TUPAC SHAKUR

Good
to kick
Bad
to kick

GRIDLOCK'd

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NEW VIDEOS

Thomas Hardy's tale may be filled with misery, but the visuals are striking in the big screen *Jude*



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THE TIMES ARTS



INTERVIEW

How Stanley Tucci moved from suave TV villain to first-time movie director with *Big Night*



TOMORROW

American choreographer Mark Morris on why he has set his sights on British opera

NEW ON VIDEO: *Jude*, Michael Winterbottom's visually remarkable adaptation of Thomas Hardy's last novel

NEW CLASSICAL CDS

A stone-cutter and his lass

JUDE

PolyGram, 15, 1996
NEITHER Thomas Hardy's last novel nor the film's director, Michael Winterbottom, are cut out for pretty pictures, and the sheer misery of this tale about dashed hopes and illicit love can get you down. But visually much is remarkable: Christopher Eccleston acts in earnest, and Kate Winslet gives a mesmerising performance as Sue, the stone-cutter's vivacious cousin, turned wan by the blows of fate. Available to rent.

BROTHERS IN TROUBLE

Connoisseur, 15, 1996
RESONANT drama about illegal immigrants in 1960s Britain, huddled in stairwells or hidden in attics in a northern town. Excellent acting and a fine sense of character help to give the film its forward drive and lighten the tone in a tale that could seem oppressive. Om Puri is dignified as the house leader Hussein Shah; Angeline Ball gives a good floorshow as the naive Irish girl whose spark prompts the house to explode. Director, Udayan Prasad.

THE CRAFT

Columbia TriStar, 15, 1996
MODESTLY pleasing variation on the high-school movie genre, showcasing lively young actresses such as Fairuza Balk and Robin Tunney. Witchcraft is practised by four social misfits at St Benedict's Academy, Los Angeles. Director and co-writer Andrew Fleming treats their vengeful pranks with jaunty black humour. Then he catches the overkill bug, and the film capsizes into routine horror. Available to rent.

THE CRUEL SEA

Warner, PG, 1993
STURDY and sober Ealing treatment of Nicholas Monsarrat's bestseller about the dangerous voyage of an Atlan-



Kissing cousins: Kate Winslet and Christopher Eccleston are the illicit lovers embarking on an emotional rollercoaster in the story of *Jude*

tic corvette during the Second World War. There are big parts for Donald Sinden and Denholm Elliott, then new talents, but Jack Hawkins's Captain Ericson strikes the dominant note of emotional restraint and patriotic duty. Women hardly get a look in: the real heroine, as the commentator suggests, is the ship herself.

ROBINSON IN SPACE
Academy, PG, 1997
FURTHER dry intellectual

games with Patrick Keiller, director of *London*, who sends his unseen narrator and his equally unseen friend, Robinson, on a journey through an England adrift from its past and destabilised by its present. Pylons, golf clubs, nuclear sites: Keiller's camera celebrates them all, while Paul Scofield's wry voice on the soundtrack entertains us with bizarre facts and analysis. Good for repeated viewings.

GEOFF BROWN

Here's another fine mess, Stanley

CINEMA: Carol Allen talks to actor/director Stanley Tucci about his thoughtful new film, *Big Night*

YOU may remember Stanley Tucci in a variety of supporting roles, such as the infamous Lucky Luciano in *Billy Bathgate*, the Arab assassin in *The Pelican Brief* or the sinister DA in *Kiss of Death*. But if none of these has stuck in your memory, anyone who watched the first series of *Murder One* on television will immediately identify him as Richard Cross, the suave villain of the piece. It is a very different Tucci who turns up in Britain this week as the co-writer, co-director and star of his own film, *Big Night*. It is the story of two Italian immigrant brothers running their own restaurant in a New York suburb in the Fifties, and is both a celebration of life and a visual gastronomic poem. But this display of Italian culinary virtuosity is, says Tucci, more than just an excuse for a foodie's night out.

"We use food as a metaphor for art, for acting, for film-making. It is also a way to express family love and conflict in both a positive and a negative way."

"We set the film in the Fifties because that was a time when mass production was really shifting into high gear, things were becoming homogenised and, on the food side, fast food and TV dinners were coming in," explains Tucci. "We have these two characters who are trying to run a business where things are made by hand on a very intimate and human scale, while America is heading in the opposite direction."

ing the film was what he sees as the almost racist attitude of the film world in its portrayal of Italian Americans as primarily gangsters. "We wanted to portray Italian Americans in a more positive light. According to the statistics there are something like 15 to 20 million Italian Americans, and only a few thousand are in the Mob or connected to it."

"I believe the largest number of doctors and lawyers in America are Italian American. My father was an art teacher until he retired a couple of years ago, my uncle was an architect. Enough is enough."

Tucci admits that the critical praise heaped on *Murder One* in the United States along with its devout following have contributed to the success of *Big Night*, which won the screenplay award at Sundance last year and has so far taken three times its \$4 million budget. But none of that has helped so far in raising the money for his next project as a writer/director: a farce set in the Thirties on a ship, in which he is hoping once more to persuade Ian Holm to take part. Meanwhile, he will next

be seen in Woody Allen's *Deconstructing Harriet* and as a crazed dentist in Danny Boyle's upcoming film, *A Life Less Ordinary*. "It's a supporting role but a really flashy, funny one. I had the greatest time doing it."



Stanley Tucci: food is a metaphor

Barry Millington

ENESCU
Symphony No 2 / Romanian Rhapsody No 2
BBC Philharmonic / Rozhdvestvensky
Chandos CHAN 9537***
£14.99

AS A violin teacher he taught Gruniaux and Menuhin, and he was a fine violinist and conductor himself. But it is as a composer that George Enescu (1881-1955) is best remembered, and in particular as the composer of the two Romanian Rhapsodies.

In these works, Enescu brought about a rapprochement between the exotic Romanian folk tradition and that of Western European art music. The First Rhapsody is the better known, but the Second, heard here, is more sonorous, more opulent in harmony, and Rozhdvestvensky is in expansive mode, drawing impressively long-breathed lines.

The Second Symphony in A major begins in boisterous vein, strongly reminiscent of Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony*, but settles down to a more measured contrast between lyrical and dynamic impulses. Rozhdvestvensky elicits from the BBC Philharmonic warm, spacious playing and, in the final stages, sheer incandescence.

John Higgins

OLGA BORODINA
Arias
Welsh National Opera Orchestra/Rizzi
Philips 446 663-2***, £15.49

OLGA BORODINA's first operatic recital on disc is distinguished and wide-ranging. Valery Gergiev was her mentor at the Kirov in St Petersburg, so she should excel in Tchaikovsky. That is exactly what she does in Joan's Act I aria from *The Maid of Orleans* and in Lisa's distinguished wait for Herman in

The Queen of Spades. Saint-Saëns's Dalia has always shown her mezzo voice at its most sumptuous, and this was an early Covent Garden role, opposite Domingo. The opulent seductiveness she breathes into *Mon cœur s'ouvre* is alone worth the price of the disc. There are few who can match her enslavement of Samson. But there is quicksilver wit in the Page's arietta from Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, while deep gratitude fills La Ceca's short Romance (*La Gioconda*). And anyone claiming that Borodina is rooted in the 19th century should try *Ombra mai fu* from Handel's *Xerxes*.

Only Marguerite's aria from the Berlioz *Damnation* fails to impress. The vivid accompaniment by Carlo Rizzi and his WNO orchestra show why they have cornered the quality recital market recently.

Hilary Finch

HANDEL, SCARLATTI
Keyboard music
Murray Perahia
Sony SK 62785***, £15.49

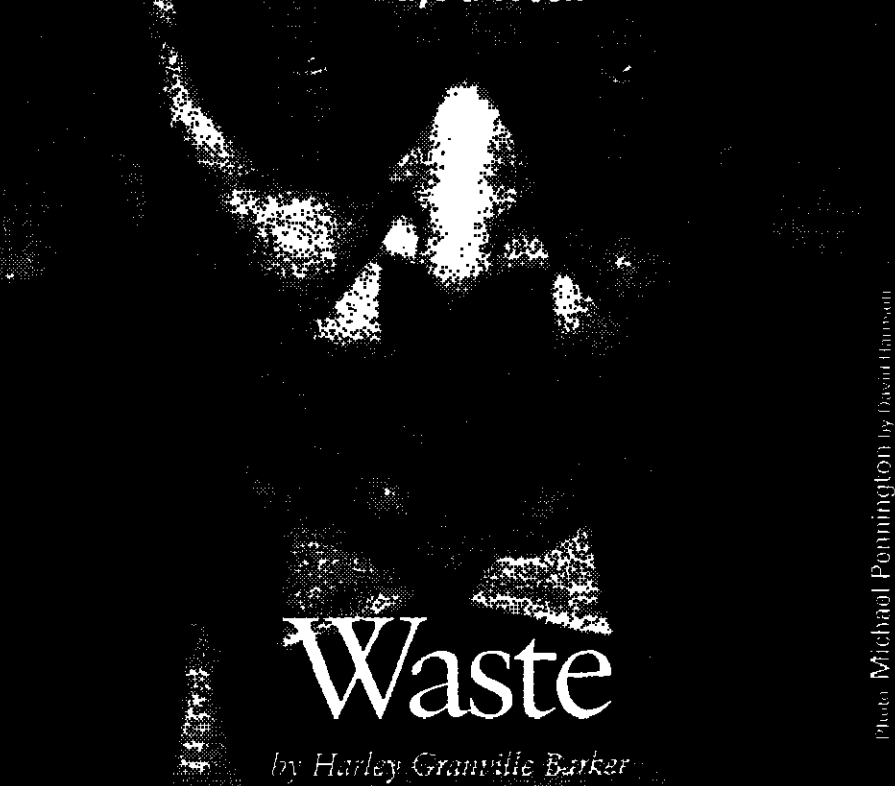
WHEN Handel was playing the harpsichord, heavily disguised as a Venetian masked ball, Domenico Scarlatti declared that "it could be no one but the famous Saxon, or the Devil". Murray Perahia has clearly measured himself by these standards in this new, unadorned recital of Handel and Scarlatti, in which technical skill and imagination vie with each other to match their original performer.

The exuberant crescendo of virtuosity in Perahia's performance of the *Harmonious Blacksmith* variations of Handel's Suite No 5 is exceeded only by the enormous cumulative excitement of the eight-minute Chaconne in G in its noble resonance and fleet-fingered wit. Perahia's depth and pliability of tone discover something at the very heart of Handel and of the piano itself: only the most tightly pursed lips could disapprove of his choice of the modern instrument for both these masterpieces, and for seven kaleidoscopic Sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti.

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cherry orchard" has visions of holiday homes for the newly enfranchised black community.

But racism doesn't grow on trees. The spectres of overcrowded townships and routine degradation are duly invoked. The fragmented black legacy is beautifully etched in the smaller roles: Joseph Jones's smug servant Nyatso, Sello Mofokeng's cowering labourer Khokholo. But the big players handle them with all the dexterity of lecture notes. The mouthpiece of the new evolution, Fana Mokoena's spiky Pitso, speaks in militant soundbites. "Everything has changed but nothing has changed..." though the (real) revolution hasn't even begun." His romance with Patricia Boyer's bright-eyed Anna, Lucy's white daughter, could have come from a manual on cross-cultural relationships.

The most moving performance is in fact Esmeralda Bivi's half-caste Maria, the illegitimate daughter of Lucy's philandering, terminally absent father. Her choked efforts to flirt with Caesar's increasingly bullish Aleksander are the most human in the production. What you end up admiring about Suzzman's production is the ingenuity and ambition of the play's transposition from Russia to South Africa. But ultimately this intelligent production fails to ignite the emotions for the simple reason that for inexplicably large chunks of the play we can't see the drama for the issues,

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

WAS it a recording session or a public concert? If the former, the Hall's presentation of Britten's *Billy Budd* should make the critics blush about making the plea for first-hand experience of the opera in its original four-act version. For the audience in the Bridgewater Hall, on the other hand, it was not the experience it might have been.

One advantage of opera performances in the concert hall is that singers lined up at the front of the stage are in a better position to get their words across. On this occasion the singers were relegated to a platform at the back between the orchestra and the chorus. For the logistics of the recording the arrangement was probably inevitable, and it can have done little harm to the live broadcast on Radio 3. To the unaided ear in the hall,

however, the singers were remote as personalities and their lyrics were caught in an exotic haze which translated the words into some exotic language only vaguely related to English.

Even Thomas Hampson, a lyrically persuasive and natural if somewhat mature Billy Budd, had difficulties in this respect. So did Anthony Rolfe Johnson, still a little insecure in the role as Captain Vere. The most impressive performances came from the cavernous Claggart of Eric Halfon and the sonorous Flirt of Gidon Saks.

The one major excision made for the now standard two-act version is the finale of what was originally the first act. Even after its brilliant performance by Kent Nagano with the Hallé Orchestra and

Choir in this restoration of the four-act version, it is difficult to regret the loss of that scene. It is true that it was shed some light on the situation in a certain muddled libretto, and it is structurally important too. But as an expression of warlike fervour from a composer who believed in nothing of the kind, it is not so much unconvincing as embarrassing.

The most rewarding aspect of this presentation of *Billy Budd* was the confirmation that the greatness of the score rests largely in the orchestral part. It is not exclusively original but it is unfailingly inspired. Naganov's command of the Hallé Orchestra, which once again signalled its technical renewal under his direction, was a precisely defined reflection of that essential aspect of the opera.

PRESENTING oneself in the celebrity spot in a place as large as the Bridgewater Hall is a tricky business for the pianist, Anders Wilder. His startlingly over-the-top recital could have been a setback, but in the event, his programme of fantasies from Bach to Balakirev was successful not only in attracting a large audience but also in securing an impressive display of enthusiasm. If he had felt any doubt about what he was doing he showed no sign of it. Indeed, the one seriously worrying moment arose when he threw himself recklessly into the opening bars of Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy*. A similar surprise attack on Balakirev's *Islamey*, however, came off.

Wilder's *Islamey* was not ideally clear but it was certainly exhilarating. So were those

uncharacteristic passages of bravura in Schubert's *Wanderer*. Where he sometimes falls short is in the more private moments. He is not lacking in wit, but he did not seem to realise the intimacy of Schubert's lyrical confessions and the acoustic poetry of the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*.

The contrast between his treatment of Chopin's Fantasy in F minor and that of the same composer's Ballade No 1 in G minor, which he added as an encore, was diagnostic. The Fantasy requires more thought and imagination than he put into it. The inspiration induced by the virtuoso writing of the Ballade, on the other hand, sustained not only the most brilliant playing but also the most convincing long-term interpretation of the evening.

▲ ANNA KARENINA (15) True version of Tolstoy's novel, with Sophie Marceau and Sean Bean. Director, Bernard Rose. (171-352 5096) Virginia: Chesapeake (171-352 5096) Maryland: Haymarket (0181-315 4212) Kensington (0181-315 4214)

▲ ASHES & CIGARETTES (15) A love story set in 1940s New York. Director, John Dahl. (171-352 5096) Virginia: Chesapeake (171-352 5096)

▲ BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD DO AMERICA (12) T.V.'s teenage moans come to life. Director, John Dahl. (171-352 5096) ABC Tottenham Court Road (071-666 8148) Empire (0960 889990) Ritz (066 818546) Regency (0960 889990) (050 888596) Regency (0960 889990) (071-352 5096) Trocadero (071-352 5096) (071-352 5096)

▲ JUNGLE 2 JUNGLE (PG) Boy from London meets a jungle handsome. Wild Street romp. Predictable, lively, comedy, with Tim Allen. (171-352 5096) Virginia: Chesapeake (171-352 5096) Maryland: Kensington (0181-315 4214) Mableton Arch (0181-315 4216) Sheriff Cottage (0181-315 4216) Regency (0960 889990) Virginia: Chesapeake (171-352 5096) Trocadero (071-352 5096) Wiener West End (071-434 0031)

▲ BOB HOBBIE (16) Adventures a la Bob. Director, Richard Linklater. (171-352 5096) Virginia: Chesapeake (171-352 5096) Maryland: Kensington (0181-315 4214) Mableton Arch (0181-315 4216) Sheriff Cottage (0181-315 4216) Regency (0960 889990) Virginia: Chesapeake (171-352 5096) Trocadero (071-352 5096) Wiener West End (071-434 0031)

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Roger Scruton goes along for the ride on one man's intellectual journey through the history and practice of philosophy

Episodes from the life of Bryan

CONFESSIONS OF A PHILOSOPHER

By Bryan Magee
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20
ISBN 0 297 81999 3

By any standards Bryan Magee is a remarkable man. He is a recognised authority on Schopenhauer and Wagner and has written books on philosophy, political science and music, several of which have had considerable impact. He has spent nearly a decade in Parliament as a back-bench MP. He is author of a distinguished novel — *Facing Death* — in which his true vocation, as lucid and troubled observer of the inner life, is realised. And he has accomplished the remarkable feat of raising the intellectual level of television without lowering its ratings.

Somehow Parliament missed the opportunity that it had in Bryan Magee, who left it without making his mark on the legislative process. I put this down to the fact that he is too much of a philosopher. He hesitates before the vastness of political problems, is aware of the dangers of believing that they have solutions, and knows how much easier it is to destroy things than create them. Which is very endearing. My chief regret is that he joined the Labour Party and then

Free Will. Magee's subsequent encounter with Oxford philosophy convinced him that academic philosophers in the British tradition have more or less nothing to contribute to the solution of philosophical problems, and he embarked thereafter on an intellectual adventure that took him through Kant and Popper and Marx to Schopenhauer.

He tells the story engagingly, although at greater length than it requires. And the book culminates in an exposition of Schopenhauer that all professional philosophers ought to read, if only because it movingly shows how to bring harmony and consolation to a troubled mind. Magee is surely right in thinking that "analytic" philosophy, as practised in our universities, could never have such an effect.

Despite this erstwhile political commitment and his profound admiration for Marx, Magee has



Magee: looks for real answers

no time for the fellow-travelling Left, and regards the excuses offered for the Soviet Union by liberal intellectuals as a *trahison des clercs* of truly gargantuan proportions: the intellectual trage-

dy is merely the surface manifestation of a profound cultural disease. Communism attracted the sympathy of thinking people because it loudly trumpeted its commitment to human equality. If you want to make your mark in the intellectual world, then you should avoid telling the truth in this one small but vital particular — namely, that people are and ought to be unequal. The inability of modern people to accept this truth has a religious origin. In my view, it is the root cause of the destruction of education in our country. Egalitarian dogma lies behind the disintegration of academic philosophy into the kind of nit-picking that Magee deplores, behind the routine assumption that Western culture is mere ideology, and behind the fact that second-rate thinkers like Raymond Williams, Jürgen Habermas and Ronald Dworkin achieve the status of gurus.

Magee is interesting largely

because he has looked to philosophy for real answers to real questions. He thinks that the meaning of life is easier to grasp through poetry and music than through abstract thinking. But it is abstract thinking that tells him why this is so. He accepts Kant's transcendental idealism in a version that was popular in 19th-century Germany, believing that empirical reality is all that we can know, but not all that there is, and he values the great German philosophers largely for their attempt to peer into the unfathomable darkness beyond the realm of empirical knowledge. He argues that analytical philosophers, typified by those whom he assembled for his television programmes, have lost sight of what the subject is about, and that their interest in words has extinguished any interest in the world. For Magee, as for Russell, Wittgenstein's early philosophy is a work of genius, while his later

philosophy is mere sophisticated word-play.

There is another reading of Kant's transcendental idealism — namely as a proof of the objectivity of scientific thinking, and of the reality of the physical world. This reading makes Kant more, not less, important than he was thought to be by his immediate followers. And the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be read as a prolonged search for the argument that would finally establish that the subject of knowledge exists in a world of objects. In my view Kant never found this argument, which was discovered only a century and a half later, by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*.

If Magee does not see this, it is partly because he has mislocated the real reason for objecting to those pompous old Oxonians whom he lined up on television. In order to show how ridiculous analytical philosophy is: namely that they are typical products of "Our Age", who combine moral flippancy with adolescent cleverness and mistake the result for wisdom.

Broken on the wheel of a dream

Claire Messud applauds the ferocious power of a novelist at his best

Seymour, "the Swede" Levov, the protagonist of Philip Roth's latest novel, is the Dostoevskian *homme de la nature et de la vérité* so despised by the narrator of *Notes from Underground*. A handsome sporting hero, a dutiful son, a loving husband and father, the prosperous owner of a factory — the Swede is god to his peers, an ideal raised, by virtue and luck, from Jewish, working-class Newark to the WASP prosperity of rural New Jersey. But, as Roth's novel explores, are always askew: "You get them wrong before you meet them, while you're anticipating meeting them; you get them wrong while you're with them; and then you go home to tell somebody else about the meeting and you get them all wrong again," notes Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's familiar alter-ego. "Since the same generally goes for them with you, the whole thing is really a dazzling illustration empty of all perception, an astonishing force of misperception."

Zuckerman sets out to inhabit the tragedy that besets an apparently perfect life, to unfurl the envious heart of a man like the Swede,

whose very straightforwardness is opacity incarnate. Constrained by the myth his community has made of him — the myth of the American Dream — the Swede has believed it. He revels in his athletic prowess, shines in the Marines, weds Dawn Dwyer, a *shiksa* beauty queen crowned "Miss New Jersey", and raises his daughter, Merry, in the liberal, secular cocoon that he has imagined America to be. Only in middle age is he jolted into the realisation, known since youth by the likes of Zuckerman, that "alone we are, deeply alone, and all ways, in store for us, a layer of loneliness even deeper".

It is Merry, the daughter of ultimate privilege, who blossoms into terrorism in the anti-Vietnam era of the late Sixties and commits the act — a lethal bombing in their upscale neighbourhood — which ruins her father's life. In its wake, she vanishes, leaving her parents to limp on in confusion. When, five years later, the Swede sees his daughter again, she has become a Jain, and lives in squalor. She has endured violence and privation unimaginable to him, and yet refuses to come home. Part of him is outraged — "Three generations. All of them growing. The working,



like the Swede, irony being a human consolation and beside the point if you're getting your way as a god," Zuckerman writes of the athlete in youth. "Either there was a whole side to his personality that he was suppressing or that was as yet asleep or, more likely, there wasn't." The tragedy is not merely the Swede's midlife awakening to his isolation, but the fact that he is awakened unprepared. Nothing in his life has prepared him for it: even his religious faith has long been abandoned.

The novel, written by an inveterate ironist, tackles the life of a man without irony: it is a task which Roth executes with unsentimental ferocity. He is acutely aware of the absurdity inherent in this protagon-

ist's undoing, but in the dismantling of the icon that is Seymour Levov, humour only intensifies the horror. The Swede's fall is an historic event, a tragedy of classical proportions: it is the Jew's final baptism into the miasma of post-Sixties America. "With the help of your daughter you're as deep in the shit as a man can get," his brother crows, "the real American crazy shit." Not only have the Newark Jews been naive to idealise the Swede; the Swede has been naive to think America is a worthy ideal. All is "misperception": all is lost. There is a truly terrible plainness in this magnificent novel's last lines: "And what is wrong with their life? What on earth is less reprehensible than the life of the Levovs?"

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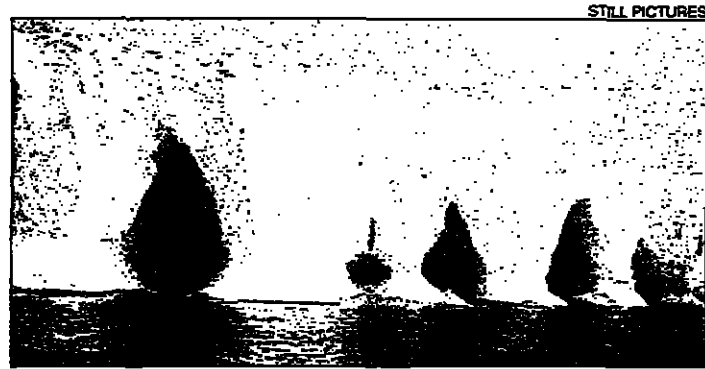
Finding cold comfort

Current wisdom has it that memoirs are in vogue because they tell a better story than modern novels do. Another reason, surely, has to do with the study of modern history: the lives of ordinary people are now acknowledged by scholars to be as valid and interesting as those of kings and queens. And in this post-Freudian age, most of us know we have a tale to tell. People often get put down for blabbing in public. Oprah Winfrey-style, to total strangers, but that might be easier than confessing to an intimate.

Memoirs satisfy the gossip and the voyeur in us: they let us peek at secrets and find out that other people are just as blundering and mixed-up as we are. Authorities may hear or pontificate about normality; we can happily collapse into glorious eccentricity. Therapy is viewed with suspicion by many, but writing a memoir lets the author stay in charge. There's no counsellor to listen or question or probe. You are in control of what you divulge. You don't need to be bothered by someone else's interpretation.

Jenny Diski's story of her childhood is a cautionary tale in this sense. She sees repression as a good thing: forgetting anguish by squashing it down helps us to cope. Analysis might hurt too much or be completely useless. And since she's an experienced and prolific novelist, you sense how she needs to recount the drama her own way and also let herself enjoy doing so.

This is her best and most moving book to date, because she puts her human self into it, sassy and vulnerable. Novels say: let me in. That works here. *Skating to Antarctica* develops humour, poetry, surrealism by turns. Diski puts all her novelistic skills at the service of



Frozen landscape that unfreezes memory: tabular iceberg, Antarctica

Michèle Roberts

SKATING TO ANTARCTICA
By Jenny Diski
Granta Books, £14.99
ISBN 1 85307 016 4

discovering and arranging autobiographical truth.

Ice links it all together. The ice of the skating rink she spun across as a child; the shining hard surface that seals off the underworld of the unconscious perhaps peopled by deep-sea monsters; the ice of Antarctica itself, the chilly rejection of a mother who did not know how to love a daughter; the splinter of ice that Graham Greene said all novelists have in our hearts.

It's a marvellous metaphor. Diski decides, she knows not why, to voyage to Antarctica. At the same time as she's going forward into that future and writing her notes like a good traveller, she's voyaging backwards, puzzling over the connection between her recurrent bouts of depression and the strange goings-on in her childhood. Parents freak out and storming off and

returning to play bizarre and abusive sexy games with their daughter. Cruelly mixed with neediness. The adult who has survived recalls the immensely brave child who battled and did her best. You track a kind of healing happening, the scars revealed, not concealed. Diski lets the reader do what her mother could not: embrace her younger self. Not one moment of sentimentality stops her recording as acutely as she can what she thinks happened, what she knows went on. She's wonderfully aided in this, like the princess in a fairytale, by a bewitching companion: her daughter, Chloe, who initiates the quest for her own lost grandmother. Chloe sounds lovely: determined, alert, curious, compassionate, bright.

You could read this just as a travel book, as a shining account of a voyage into the heart of Antarctica. Glimmering under the surface, however, preserved by the cold, there's the figure of a woman who's both a bad mother and the mirrored reader melting into tears.

Michèle Roberts's latest novel, *Impossible Saints*, is published by Little, Brown priced £14.99.

Written on the body

Russell Celyn Jones

A SKIN DIARY

By John Fuller
Chatto & Windus, £9.99
ISBN 0 7011 6669 X

A SKIN DIARY is a long poem sculpted as fiction. Or the other way around. What it certainly is is a record of days, covering the nine-month gestation of one woman's pregnancy. It is quite a show, each entry a free-wheeling stanza, full of ellipses and epiphanic philosophies which at times make for an inscrutable read: "No silver snatched off a lintel compares with the secure harbour of knowledge." If you can make sense of that, then try this: "Now you have an idea that the one is not a who, it's a what. The what is a thing and a question. And that what is now not then. Above all it is not a one at all. That what is it. And you."

In part the novel is about language itself and sees Fuller, who has written more than 30 books of poetry and prose, in full flight. But as a novel it is hard to know how it can belong to a reader who will have certain expectations of the form. So be advised: this is a work which is best approached as a metaphysical meditation on love, work and labour — of the fields and of child bearing.

Be prepared too for passages of untranslated Welsh, that Fuller enjoys for the internal rhyme and sound of it, and the found poems that seem to fly out of nowhere: "Where is Idwal who drank the bowl of starch in the larder... Where are the fingers that made the shilling walk? Where is the weeping eye?"

There is, however, a discernible narrative. A young Welsh girl, Mair, living at the turn of the century in rural Wales, gets pregnant by Gruffudd the sheep farmer. Kept ignorant of this until after they are married (he is coerced into the wedding), Gruffudd becomes maudlin. Consumed by jealousy (could the child be Dafydd Thomas's?) he vanishes with his flock, leaving her to run the gauntlet of

folk in a high chapel society. She waits for him, the fixed foot of a twin compass. "Inside the cottage the smell of berries; beyond, the smell of sheep." He returns as suddenly as he left, after 13 weeks have passed, but with "a stone in his soul which is like the shadow of the child."

MAIR's determination to connect him to the unborn child constitutes the book's main theme. Will he show as much interest in it as he does in his look? For Gruffudd is more at ease mating Maharajah the ram with the ewes than he is in bed with his wife. But to be loved by this woman would be a gift to any man, a god-sent charm. Providing, that is, she shares the presence of the narrator (the diary is written in the second person and is addressed to Mair), who has the measure of Gruffudd's internal mechanism — he is "always holding something back, like a schoolmaster in the holidays".

So who is the narrator? A ghost, perhaps. "There is a word for who I am, but no one has learnt it yet." Or the unborn child? One idea mooted is that a child can be dead before he is born.

"You can say it was Cain who died before his father was born, but we have heard of other fathers who thought their sons might be fatherless." It is anybody's guess right to the end that sees Mair in labour. Her pain will take her "straight to heaven" — while the narrator simultaneously struggles to midwife himself.

Once upon a time there was an accountant

In or about December 1910, human character changed... This is Virginia Woolf's contention, with specific reference to the first exhibition of the Post-Impressionists in London, and the way it demonstrated something new about the difficulty of distinguishing between perceiver and thing perceived. Human character "changed" as a result. Art (including literature) certainly became more self-conscious.

This may seem a funny way of introducing new novels by Stanley Middleton and Anita Brookner, both of whom are usually appraised as realists. In fact, though, Brookner writes disenchanted fairytales of modern love, and Middleton once threatened to go after a critic with a jack-knife if put down as a social realist. Each of them has taken note of that shift in our way of seeing, and sought a fictive method which will enact it.

Brief Hours concerns a retired accountant, Frank Stapleton, who has been comfortable enough in his skin, apart from one terrible moment in his childhood when he was overwhelmed with fear at the thought that the Universe might be meaningless. Now his world goes dead on him again, when his son's marriage seems on the point of disintegration and his daughter-in-law and two grandsons are reported killed in a road accident. Neither catastrophe actually happens, and there is an almost happy ending, with (as often with this author) a happy reunion and a partial resolution which involves listening to a piece of classical music.

Middleton is certainly not a reporter content to reproduce the surfaces of existence. Look at his dialogue: no one ever spoke like this, but it rings true because we feel that in certain situations this is how people ought to speak. Look at the way he ends his chapters: bleak admonitory sentences with occasionally the sort of qualified lyrical gesture you get

at the end of a poem by Philip Larkin. "An apostle of puzzlement", Middleton has called himself. Yet *Brief Hours* is not in itself a puzzle. It just looks at everything close up, as love sees.

Anita Brookner's *Visitors* is equally satisfying. Dorothea May, a widow, finds herself at the age of 70 with a young man thrust upon her as a lodger. The intruder is Steve, arrived from America to be best man at the wedding of one of her relatives. He turns out to be gay and to play the guitar. Mrs May, a self-sufficient solitary, suffers agonies of embarrassment as she tries to come to terms with this stranger. After the wedding, he kisses her with a camp passion learnt from

Hollywood movies of the Forties, and then walks out of her life, all as casually as he entered it.

This novel is excellent on the way that the young can seem like aliens to an older generation. It is also amusing on the subject of religious enthusiasm... the prospective groom is an evangelical of the kind that tends to solicit cheers at the name of Jesus. There is drama when the wedding is nearly called off, but Mrs May saves the day by curing the bride's panic with the suggestion of a new hair-do.

Visitors is slight, but nothing in it is forced to assume significance. There are some uncommonly well-constructed sentences in it, words running along the grain of language, images illuminating the narrative as naturally as knots in a piece of well-waxed oak. Like Jane Austen, this novelist works on a little square of ivory rather than a broad canvas, and the result is no worse for that. Like Virginia Woolf, her aim is not to draw characters in the round, but to reveal psychological reality in the deep. Brookner is fascinated by persons who understand themselves too well for comfort, persons not really at home in their own skins. Mrs May hates seeing herself with her clothes off.

Robert Nye

BRIEF HOURS

By Stanley Middleton
Hutchinson, £15.99
ISBN 0 09 18073 7

VISITORS

By Anita Brookner
Corgi, £15.99
ISBN 0 224 06288 2



1918. Mrs Pankhurst addresses a crowd in Trafalgar Square as women get the vote

Once more for the record: don't take history for granted

With the millennium in the air, commentators have begun the daunting task — in forums ranging from museum retrospectives to foreign policy rhetoric to histories such as Sheila Rowbotham's *A Century of Women* — of trying to tease whatever might be the lasting historical lessons from the cultural and political chaos that has been the 20th century. Since it was merely a matter of time before someone attempted this potentially deadeningly momentous project in the name of women, we can thank our stars for Sheila Rowbotham, who has written an almost improbably lively, readable, and balanced account of the gender wars of one messy century.

We can also thank our stars for whatever it was that happened to Rowbotham since she wrote her early works, *Women, Resistance and Revolution* and *Women's Consciousness, Man's World*. These two books were landmarks of early second-wave British socialist feminist thought — and their prose style shows how heavily landmark status can weigh on the reader. If Rowbotham's hard work was tub-thumping, hard to get through, and impeccably correct by the standards of academic British feminism, *A Century of Women* is blessedly full of just the kind of colour, wit and slyness that can get a girl drummed out of the collective. In her acknowledgements, a correspondence with American historians gets good play; it's tempting to imagine a transatlantic conversation that may have strengthened the Americans' class analysis — and loosened up the British academic's approach to popular culture.

Predictably, Rowbotham is especially strong on her field of specialisation, the history of British working-class women and the nexus of British feminism, socialism and trade unionism. Though well-intentioned, she is weak on the history of African-American women and the civil rights movement. Yet her willingness to range beyond the narrow, if crucial, traditional socialist-feminist analysis of class and economic conditions into the texture of ordinary women's lives demonstrates a refreshing respect for actual, as opposed to theoretical, female subjects — for the "roses" of life as well as the "bread".

This method broadens the concerns of anonymous, otherwise forgotten women of the recent past startlingly to life: history now includes "births, betrayals, ecstasy or even the washing day". Recurring sections titled "Politics", "Work", "Daily Life" and "Sex" are

Naomi Wolf finds that the lessons of feminism have not sunk in

engagingly broken by sidebar excursions into such areas as upper-class lesbian chic in Paris in the Twenties, the role of black women in the Hollywood of the Thirties, World War Two cartoon heroines, *Tatler's* coverage of debutantes in the Fifties, CND women's fashions in the Sixties, and so on, the narrative shifting from female high culture to low, from women's elite literature to pop trends, from labour organisations to fashion. This technique, while it can feel choppy and stroboscopic, is uniquely suited to the choppy, stroboscopic century that gave us both the mass media and what has come to be known as Postmodernism.

"But can history tell us what should be done?" Rowbotham

A CENTURY OF WOMEN
The History of Women in Britain and the United States
By Sheila Rowbotham
Viking, £20
ISBN 0 670 37420 5

asks rhetorically, and concludes with an historian's cautious modesty: "The blunt answer has to be that it cannot." But the insights that leap from the pages of her own work contradict this assertion. Indeed, throughout these pages the obvious answers to seemingly intractable social problems slap the reader in the face. Decade after decade, as mothers have worked at home as well as in the marketplace, they were and are expected to be (at the expense of themselves and their families) "in two places at once" — yet with virtually no structural accommodation from employers or government. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to draw the obvious policy conclusion from the record.

Other practical uses of this sort of history present themselves with great force. Young women today are often uninformed about the struggles on their behalf of women of the past. The history of the incarceration and force-feeding of women, early in the century, who were demanding rights that young women today can

now take for granted should be on every secondary-school syllabus. For solutions to feminism's current bad press, we should look to the PR triumphs of the British suffragettes, with their consumed marches and dazzling graphics, who prevailed over anti-feminist stereotypes identical to our own: to pro-life agitators in the current abortion wars, we should cite her recurring history of dangerous abortifacients: "scalding hot baths, gunpowder mixed with margarine, slippery elm and penny royal... doctors started to report a tell-tale blue line on the lips, a sign of diachylon or lead plaster poisoning".

Similarly, we should refer contemporary feminist essentialists, who hold that women are innately nicer than men, to Rowbotham's evidence that "the Primrose League and the Klan have their women's history as well as the Co-operative or trade union movements... Belonging to a subordinated sex is not an automatic ticket to ride with angels".

What comes through clearly for the lay reader is a truth too familiar to anyone who has studied the history of 20th-century feminism. That insight is how consistently feminists have been forced to revisit the same ground. Virtually every debate heralded as ground-breaking by second-wave feminists had been fought out to the point of exhaustion by their foremothers 50 or 60 years before, from the 1909 pamphlet, *Marriage as a Trade* to the debate about wages for housework in the Seventies, from Labour Party member Ellen Wilkinson's comment in the Twenties — reiterated by *Ms* magazine as a cutting-edge joke in the Seventies — that "What I Need is a Wife", from Charlotte Perkins Gilman's exposure of the brutality latent in the "normal" male role to Andrea Dworkin's and Joan Smith's excited reiteration of the theory more than half a century later.

Despite this eternal recurrence of feminist concerns, this compilation is indispensable because it does prove, finally, how far we have come. Its power lies in its showing that the momentous changes women now enjoy came to us not from the top down, but rather from the thousands of tired individuals of thousands of tired individual women who each gave the cause of female freedom that one last push.

Naomi Wolf looks back at San Francisco, her hometown, in *Saturday's Magazine*; her latest book, *Prozac Nation*, is published by Chatto, priced £12.99.



Helen Dunmore: risky



Penelope Lively: reliable

Despairing of Scheherazade

other's Postmodern angst rattles in each staccato phrase.

Asked to write a short story, you might hand over the Penelope Lively and advise an analysis of its inner workings. He or she could do a lot worse. I doubt you would offer Helen Dunmore — yet. For the Dunmore style is too easy to parody. It might induce the wannabe to believe that all you have to do is step from A to B in narrative, and that will do. Dunmore can get away with murder because she is good. She can be very good indeed. But you would want others to learn to draw before they pretend to be Klee.

Bernard Malamud's explanation of his own writing came out as a passionate cry: "story, story, story!". Penelope Lively's work exemplifies that old-fashioned imperative. These are narratives with

beginnings, middles and ends; you are invariably curious to know how resolution will be effected. Quiet people rebel against spouses or children; good deeds blow up in faces; a selfish philanthropist gets his comeuppance. It is faultlessly achieved — with room for fantasy in *The Children of Grupp* and *The Five Thousand and One Nights*.

This last story is a metaphor about storytelling itself, and serves as a good transition to *Love of Fat Men*. Lively's Sultan rebels when Scheherazade abandons story and takes up magical realism. He craves event, character and action, but his wife teaches creative writing... Helen Dunmore's collection is ingeniously constructed: ev-

The stab in the heart

Daniel Johnson on a judicious look at the Jewish plight under Nazism

Were all Germans implicated in the Holocaust? Or was the Nazi Judeocide part of a secret agenda which Hitler and his lieutenants deliberately hid from most Germans? The history of Germany and the Jews was thrown into turmoil last year with the publication of *Hitler's Willing Executioners* by Daniel Goldhagen, a young political scientist from Harvard. This damning indictment of "ordinary Germans" insisted that most of them had supported, actively or tacitly, the Nazi "national project". In Germany, the author scandalised most historians but held vast audiences of the less critical younger generation spellbound.

Now out in paperback (Abacus, £9.99), Goldhagen's book is worth reading, but as a speculative essay rather than as a comprehensive analysis by a professional historian. In fact, Goldhagen's thesis is not entirely new: it has much in common with works of the Forties, by writers such as A. J. P. Taylor and R. H. O'D. Butler, who argued that the Nazis were not an aberration but the

NAZI GERMANY AND THE JEWS
Volume I: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939
By Saul Friedländer
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20
ISBN 0 297 81882 1

culmination of consistent patterns in German history.

In response to irate liberal scholars, such as Hans Mommsen, who accuse the book of reviving the thesis of German collective guilt, Goldhagen has conceded that Germany is now a model democracy. But he then encounters a conceptual problem: if the Germans *qua* Germans will the annihilation of European Jewry, who is to say that they have changed? The debate provoked by Goldhagen quickly degenerated into a fruitless slanging match between American Jews and Germans, in which both sides oscillate between masochism and indignation.

The first volume of Saul Friedländer's *Nazi Germany and the Jews* is therefore timely. This will be the standard work for many years to come. Calmly, it tells its tale of horror without once hinting at the fact that the author was, as a youth, one of the Nazis' victims. The material is so voluminous that Friedländer is selective. But it is clear to anyone familiar with his sources that he nowhere distorts his evidence.

What emerges is an unlovely portrait of the German people: less damning than Goldhagen's, but far more persuasive. Even those who opposed the Nazis on other issues scarcely lifted a finger to speak up for the 500,000 German Jews. Friedländer leaves no doubt that the majority of Germans were anti-Semitic enough to be indifferent to stigmatisation, segregation and expropriation of Jews, even when the latter were defined accord-

George Grosz's 1923 drawing of Hitler as Siegfried, with bear's teeth and sword, caricatures the Nazi use of Germanic mythology. From *The Berlin of George Grosz*, edited by Frank Whitford (Yale, £35)

ing to the bizarre criteria of Nazi race theory.

But anti-Semitism is a broad category, and it is in distinguishing between its varieties that Friedländer parts company from Goldhagen. Both agree that traditional religious or economic anti-Semitism was prevalent in early 20th-century Germany, as elsewhere in Europe. But Goldhagen thinks Nazi racial ideology had been adopted by much of the German population long before Hitler came to power. Friedländer, by contrast, argues that such extreme anti-Semitism was restricted to quite narrow groups even after 1933.

If, as I believe, Friedländer is right, then it is much easier to explain why the Nazi elite's advocacy of a radical "final solution" was not made public until quite late. The legitimising role of the Führer, displaced by more

deterministic or structuralist accounts, emerges here as crucial. Hitler often posed as a moderate: in an interview for *The Times* of 1930, for instance, he declared that he had no objection to "decent Jews".

After becoming Chancellor, though, he gave the British Ambassador Sir Horace Rumbold the clear impression that "he is a fanatic on the subject". And in 1937 he revealed his true intentions to an elite party school: "And now may cleverness help me to manoeuvre you [Jews] into a corner in such a way that you will not manage a single blow; it is then that you get the stab in the heart". Friedländer comments: "The recording of this secret speech survived the war. By this stage Hitler is shouting at the top of his voice. Then, in an orgasmic spasm, the

last three words literally explode: 'Das ist es!' (That's it!) The audience's applause is frenetic. A year later came the nationwide pogrom of *Kristallnacht*.

As this volume ends on the eve of war, with German Jewry already "a broken remnant", Friedländer concludes that Hitler had reinforced the "passive complicity" of the populace. "But outside party ranks, there was no massive popular agitation to expel them from Germany or to unleash violence against them. The majority of Germans accepted the steps taken by the regime and... looked the other way." That seems to me to fit the evidence: better than Goldhagen's attribution of genocidal sentiments to the majority. But in wartime, the circle of complicity was to spread ever wider. To discover just how wide, we must await a second volume.

Not an ugly duckling

Dominic Bradbury

THE SWAN
By Gudbergur Bergsson,
translated by
Bernard Scudder
Mare's Nest, £8.95
ISBN 1 899 197 35 4

view of its introspective

nine-year-old protagonist. Exiled from her coastal city and her parents as punishment for shoplifting, "the girl" comes to live with a farming family in a remote rural community. She is welcomed by the farmer and his wife, but remains an outsider to them and to their free spirited daughter, suffering over her

decision to have an abortion. Only the weak-willed, love-starved farmhand shows her much attention, travelling the borders between paternalism and a more sinister sexual interest.

Bergsson's characters are purposefully unrounded, and even the existential trials of his intelligently, imaginatively central character never completely flesh her out. What is more important is the way she comes to see the countryside, to understand the value of a simpler, more natural way of living in a community which is trying to preserve its traditions while at the same time struggling to come to terms with the modern world. Overlying this there is the myth of

The Swan, a magical fairytale monster who rises to the surface of the mountain lakes every summer.

With its pervading sense of dislocation, along with metafictional touches highlighting the myths, conventions and

standing of Iceland's literary rural rides, *The Swan* is never a simple or a comforting read. It is a haunting, bleakly complicated book, but one that settles in your mind and refuses to leave, with the image of a melancholy child ultimately liberated by her immersion in a rich landscape suffused with history and folklore.

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Talk us through the flight delays

The 151 Thomson passengers delayed for more than 36 hours at Gatwick last weekend should now be getting over the infuriating start to their holiday in Cyprus.

While customers prepare their claims for compensation, senior officials throughout the Thomson organisation have studied what went so horribly wrong in an effort to prevent it from happening again.

But it could be repeated throughout the coming peak holiday season unless every tour operator, every airline and every passenger also learns the lessons forced upon Thomson. For it all could — and, indeed, should — have been largely avoided.

Thomson's regular Saturday morning flight to Paphos is operated by Eurocyprus Airlines, the charter arm of the state-owned Cyprus Airways. Based in Larnaca, it uses Airbus A320 jets with both the right number of seats and, more important, the slot for flight ECAR15 to take off at the perfect time of 11.30am. Britannia, Thomson's own "in-house" airline, has bigger aircraft and no such slot.

The passengers checked into the south terminal at about 9.30am, boarded the twin-engine jet which was then pushed back for take-off almost exactly on time.

But, as the pilot began to taxi towards the runway, there was a distinctly unpleasant rattle from the right-hand IAE V2500 engine. He had no option but to return to the stand, disembark the passengers and have it fixed.

Eurocyprus's maintenance work is carried out by engineers employed by FLS Aerospace. They opened up the engine and, at first, thought they could see exactly what was wrong. It should be ready by 1.30pm, they thought. But by 3pm still nothing had been heard and the passengers were beginning to get fractious. FLS eventually concluded that an

electrical part had to be replaced. It was now 5.45pm and the particular part was not available locally. The passengers, Thomson decided, must stay in a hotel overnight while it was ferried from Cyprus. Cyprus Airways promised to deliver it to Gatwick early the next morning.

There was no spare aircraft to charter over the busy Bank Holiday weekend although Britannia did have one standing by at Manchester. It was not used.

The part eventually arrived at 10.30 on Sunday morning, by which time the passengers were becoming really cross. Their bags were checked in and they were allowed into the departure lounge, effectively marooning them inside.

At 1.30pm the engine was tested and a whole series of new problems — this time with the engine's speed protection unit — showed up.

By now, a 241-seat Cyprus Airways Airbus A310 jet was at Heathrow. Eurocyprus called in crew to fly it and the angry passengers to Paphos. By the time they had transferred and finally departed, it was 11.30 on Sunday night — 36 hours late.

The key mistake throughout was a lack of information. Mobile telephones should enable even remote engineers to explain what they are doing and why. Passengers understand that engines can become faulty. And if they are told exactly what is wrong they will not become so angry that the police have to be called in, as they were on Sunday.

Staff with the clout to find out what is happening throughout the organisation must cover each flight and liaise directly with passengers. More spare aircraft must be made available.

Last year the reputation of one major tour operator was almost destroyed by flight delays and a lack of information. It must not be allowed to happen this summer.

TRAVEL ON SATURDAY

A four-page special on the joys of France: hunting boar in the Var; city breaks in Bordeaux and Lyons; and the ten best B&Bs plus Jill Crawshaw's travel tips

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CHANGING TIMES

Hotels cash in on foreign exchange

By STEVEN KEBAN

HOTELS are charging up to ten times more than credit card companies or cash dispensers when changing foreign currency, according to a survey by American Express.

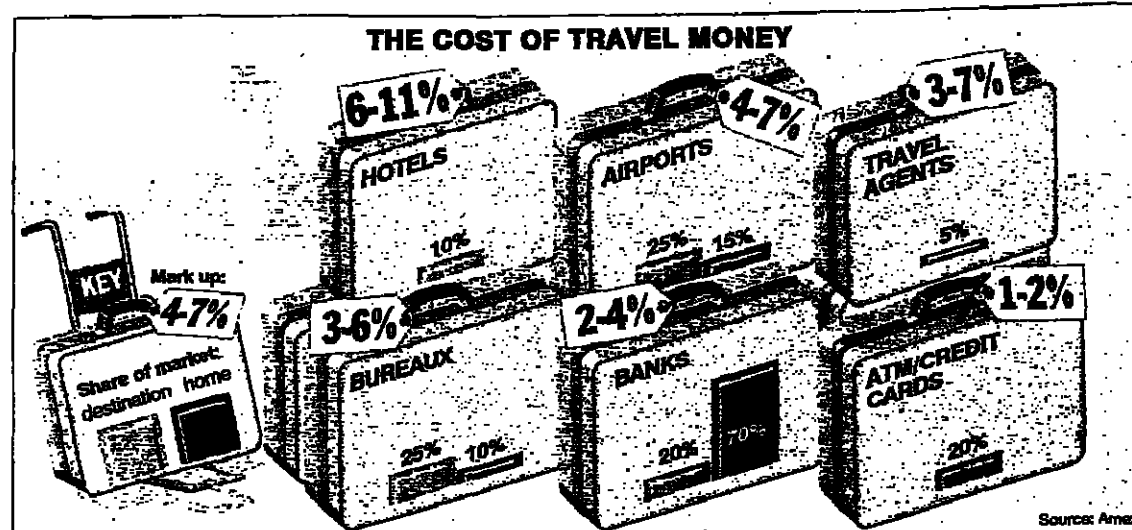
The survey shows that hotels charge up to 11 per cent commission compared to 1 or 2 per cent on credit cards and cash dispensers.

Hotels account for 10 per cent of all foreign currency transactions. But emerging technology, the loss of duty-free facilities in Europe in 1999 and the prospect of a single currency will radically alter how and where travellers change their cash, adds the report.

Foreign exchange transactions in Europe will fall 40 per cent by 2002, estimates Amex, with fewer competitors and exchange facilities at borders, airports and rail stations.

The company plans to recover lost income by working with banks, airports, supermarkets and transport companies to open new exchange outlets in the UK and abroad.

One key area is hotel receptions, where Amex is planning to install automatic cash dispensers, which will exchange currency at rates more closely aligned to the company's nearest bureaux de change. Pilot schemes in France and the US will be introduced this summer, with hotels splitting commission levels with Amex. "Hotels charge a lot to change



money but they are not really geared up for it," says Steve Flett, senior vice-president of foreign exchange at Amex. "Ideally, they would like everything sorted out electronically."

Mike Toynbee, editor of *Executive Travel*, says hotel exchange rates have long been a bane of business travellers. "It is a nice little earner for hotels, like telephone charges. You are paying for the convenience of changing money out of hours and on your doorstep," Jean Hopkins, manager of the hotel unit at business travel agency Gray Daves Internet, says. "With ATM machines so widespread, we advise clients not to carry

as much foreign currency as in the past. The real problems start when the traveller has to use hotel facilities and usually pays the price."

The UK is the third biggest travel money market in the world, behind the US and Germany, with £11 billion spent last year on foreign exchange and travellers' cheques.

Worldwide, the banks control 70 per cent of the market. But in the UK, the figure has shrunk to 50 per cent.

The trend towards remote banking has seen Amex set up an operation to act as middleman between travellers and their banks. Customers ring in their order, the bank passes on the

request and Amex delivers the money to the home or office.

Amex wants to install automatic exchange machines at airport gates, on board trains, ferries and even aircraft.

Research by the company shows that 70 per cent of travellers change money on the day of travel — with 50 per cent buying at the airport.

Business hotels worldwide are pushing up room prices faster than inflation to capitalise on the growing demand for hotel rooms from business travellers, *David Churchill* writes. Surveys of UK and interna-

tional luxury hotel room rates, published this week, show average increases of at least 10 per cent in some countries — with considerably higher increases in several others.

While business travellers face higher charges, many European hotels are still offering discounts for tourists this summer during traditionally quiet periods for business travel.

The surveys show that London business hotels have imposed some of the highest price increases in the past year. In its new Hotel Benchmark Survey 1997, consultants Arthur Andersen reports that London hotel rates rose by 14.4 per cent, with hotels in the Heathrow area rising by 15.3 per cent.

American Express, in its latest hotel index, also shows that London deluxe hotel room rates rose by 10 per cent in the first quarter of 1997 compared with the first three months of last year.

Business travellers heading for North America and Asia face the highest increases, according to the survey. Luxury hotel rates in Chicago, for example, were up by 26 per cent year on year, with Bombay business hotels charging 25 per cent more and those in Hong Kong raising rates by 19 per cent.

Across the UK as a whole, the Amex survey revealed an 8 per cent rise in average room rates in business hotels.

Cook brings home the bacon

By RONALD GRIBBLE

MORE than 200 years after Captain Cook sailed to Australia, the £8 million replica of his ship of discovery, *Endeavour*, has been drawing remarkable crowds to British resorts during the first half of its UK tour and breaking tourist records.

Whitby in North Yorkshire, where the original *Endeavour* was built, is estimated to be richer by £5 million this month after being swamped by a million visitors who came to see the ship arrive home.

Everyone in the town, from its fish and chip shops to the smallest bed and breakfast, has benefited from the influx of holidaymakers.

Lyn Dover, administration officer for the Endeavour Foundation in London, said: "The response has been fantastic. Whitby has a population of only 16,000 and every bed in the town was booked. Over the nine days that the *Endeavour* was on exhibition, 21,700 people visited the ship."

David James, director of tourism, said: "Our research shows that we had about 1.2 million visitors and the total spend was well over £5 million. Some businesses reported making as much in a day as they normally make in a year. We even had a bread shortage."

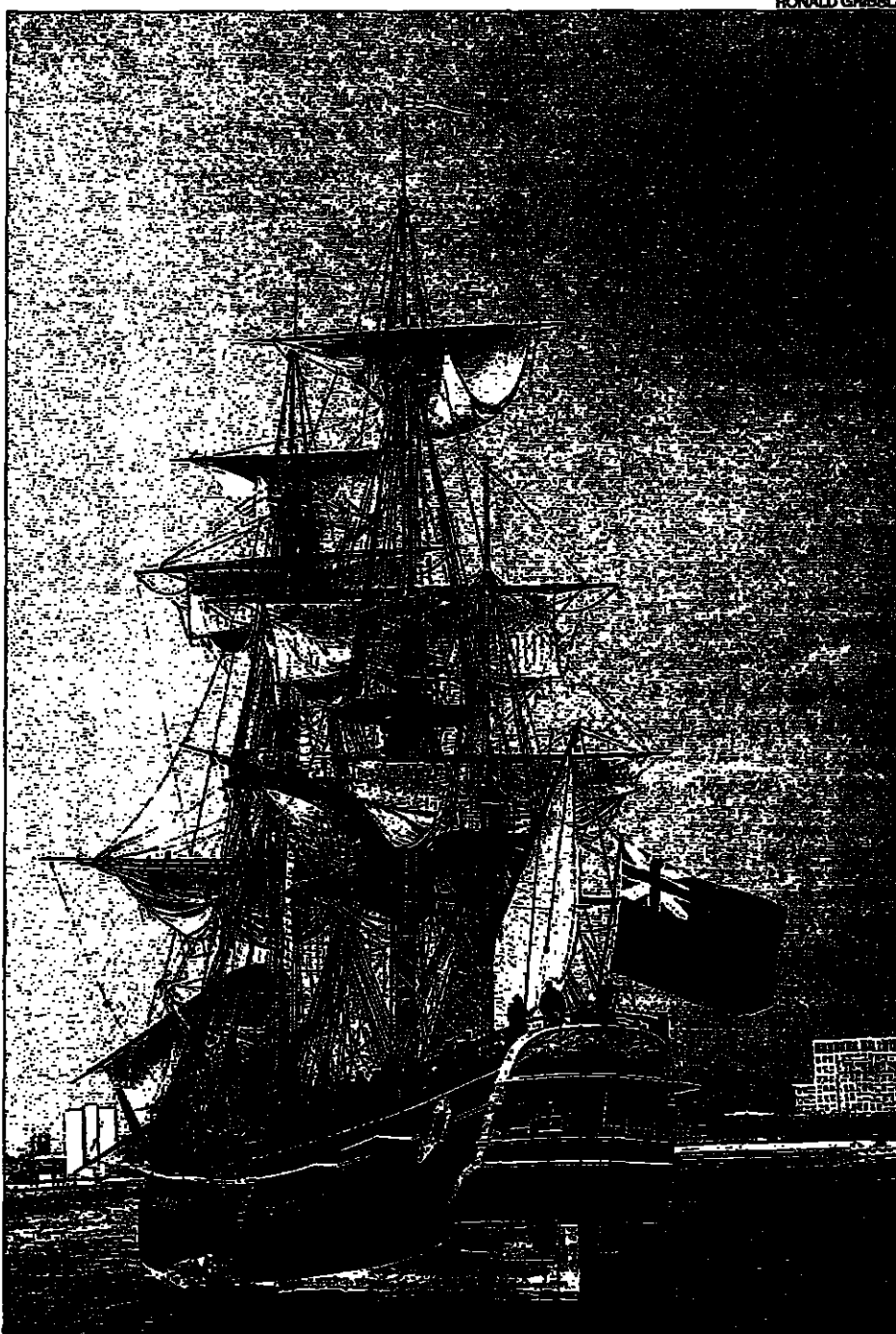
Thousands lined the banks of the Thames and Tower Bridge when *Endeavour* arrived in London at the end of March after her six-month voyage from Australia. While on display at Greenwich 30,500 visited the ship; at Great Yarmouth it attracted 17,600 sightseers and at Boston 10,400.

Endeavour is now on exhibition at Leith, Edinburgh, until Sunday. She then sails to Inverness where she will be visited by the Duke of York on June 7 at Shore Street Quay.

The *Endeavour* was a three-masted coal carrier built in Whitby in 1765. She was converted three years later by the Royal Navy to accommodate the first of three great Pacific voyages by Cook which would see him chart the ocean from New Zealand to the Arctic so accurately that his maps can still be used today.

Andrew Milson, of the Captain Cook Memorial Museum in Whitby, said: "Normally about 17,000 people visit the museum in a year. During the *Endeavour's* stay in Whitby we had 6,000 visitors in just over a week."

The museum, in Grape



The £8 million replica of Captain Cook's *Endeavour* on her six-month tour of the UK

Lane, is the former home of the Quaker master mariner, John Walker, where the young Cook took lodgings to study seamanship in 1746. He was apprenticed to Walker and worked for him for nine years, sailing coal ships between Newcastle and London.

The empty ships were used to bring back barrels of urine from East End pubs for use in the Yorkshire alum mining industry, which needed vast quantities of cheap ammonia to turn the alum into crystals

for tanning leather and dyeing wool. For London sailors desperate for work, there was always the prospect of being hired to crew Walker's ships for the return journey to Whitby, hence the name of the famous Thames-side tavern, *The Prospect of Whitby*.

Cook formed a close friendship with Walker and wrote to him detailing his voyages before being clubbed to death at the age of 51 in a skirmish with natives in Hawaii.

The *Endeavour* is on exhibi-

tion in Inverness until June 15. After that she goes to Greenock (June 28-July 6); Liverpool (July 11-20); Fishguard (July 26-August 3); Falmouth (August 9-17); Plymouth (August 23-31); Weymouth (September 6-9); Brighton (September 13-21); St Helier, Jersey (September 27-October 3). The ship then leaves for a six-day exhibition in St Malo (October 7-12) before returning to Plymouth on October 17, in preparation for her voyage to the United States.

Britain bans all Nigerian flights

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

ALL direct air links between Britain and Nigeria have been suspended after Glenda Jackson, the Transport Minister, ordered a tightening of air safety standards.

Little more than two weeks after taking up her post as the junior transport minister responsible for aviation, Miss Jackson shocked Nigerian officials by banning all flights from Nigeria until air safety checks on Nigerian-registered jets were improved.

In retaliation, Nigeria refused to allow British Airways to operate its daily Boeing 747 jumbo jet to Lagos, cutting off direct contact between the two countries.

The action began when inspectors from the Civil Aviation Authority became concerned about the condition of an old Boeing 707 cargo jet, which had arrived at Stansted. An inspection of the aircraft showed that it had a series of defects that needed urgent attention.

A week later, another Nigerian cargo aircraft, which also landed at Stansted, was found to have similar problems and it was immediately impounded. A report on the two incidents was sent to the Department of Transport.

Miss Jackson then ordered that all aircraft from Nigeria, including the state-owned carrier Nigerian Airways, should be banned from flying into Britain until safety levels and inspections had improved.

Nigerian Airways was particularly angry at the decision because more than \$6 million had just been spent overhauling and refitting a McDonnell Douglas DC10 tri-jet, which was planned for the London route.

"We believe that this was politically motivated," a spokesman for the Nigerian High Commission in London said. "The Nigerian Airways aircraft are certainly airworthy and, indeed, they are even safer than any British Airways aircraft because Ni-

gerian Airways has never been involved in an accident. It is particularly annoying for the thousands of passengers who travel between Nigeria and Britain each year. We feel sorry for the many people whose travel plans have been ruined by this unnecessary and politically motivated action."

Passengers now have to fly with BA via Ghana or travel to Amsterdam, where they can pick up a KLM flight to Lagos.



Jackson: safety standards

A BA spokesman said: "This is a very important route for us but we are caught in the middle of a dispute between governments. We are doing our best to switch passengers on to flights to Ghana and then on to connecting services to Lagos."

The United States began clamping down on Third World airlines' safety standards last year. Now CAA inspectors also routinely inspect all foreign-registered jets in an attempt to ensure that they are maintained to international standards.

Nigeria has given cause for concern for some time because of an apparent lack of control in the country. Last week, 50 employees of Nigerian Airways were arrested in connection with the theft of high-tech computer navigational aids.

Cypriot protests scare off holidaymakers

By DANIEL MCGRODY

TOURISTS are staying away from Cyprus as increasing numbers, scared off by publicity about violence on the divided island, Cypriot travel agents admitted this week.

The number of holidaymakers dropped by 7.5 per cent after the most serious communal disturbances since the Turkish invasion in 1974. To make up for the loss of European visitors, the Cypriot tourist authorities are concentrating their efforts on Russians who are fast becoming their best customers. A key hotel in Larnaca reported that 70 per cent of its guests next month are Russian.

There is now a daily flight from Moscow to Larnaca and Russians do not need visas. Many visit the island on property-buying missions, which has upset prospective European purchasers as prices spiral. To cater for their visitors, Russian restaurants are opening in the resort of Limassol, along with nightclubs and even a Russian supermarket. However, security authorities are concerned that the influx has also brought criminal elements

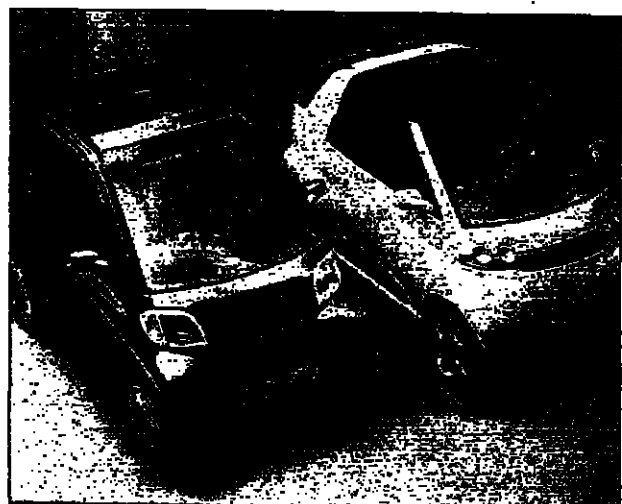
from the Russian mafia.

Tourism chiefs are worried by suggestions that there will be more violence along the ceasefire line that divides the island as demonstrations are planned in August to mark the deaths of two Greek Cypriots last year.

The reduction in holidaymakers pushed the contribution of tourism to Cyprus's gross domestic product down to 18 per cent in 1996, compared to 21 per cent in 1995. Panicos Apeyinos, chairman of the Association of Cyprus Travel Agents said:

"He said bookings for the first months of this year were down but he was hopeful that the summer season would not lag behind that of 1996. 'If there is no further negative publicity and we are more active in promotion and advertising, 1997 may reach the same levels as 1996,' he said."

Last summer, two Greek Cypriots were killed in separate incidents during mass protests in the United Nations-controlled buffer zone. A month later, a Turkish Cypriot sentry was found shot dead at his post.



The two-seater Smart — cheap on fuel, easy to manoeuvre

Revolutionary car for hire in Spain

By KEVIN EASON

HOLIDAYMAKERS will have the first chance to drive the revolutionary city car being sold next year by the Swatch watch company.

Tourists to Spain's major resorts will be able to hire it as part of their holiday package, three years before the tiny two-seater goes on sale in Britain.

The car — called the Smart — is being made by MCC, a manufacturing company owned jointly by Swatch, the successful producer of fashionable watches, and Mercedes-Benz, the world's oldest carmaker.

The result of their collaboration is a stubby but tall car unlike any other on the road. Final details of how it will be powered have not yet been

released, but it is expected that even with conventional petrol or diesel power, it will be capable of more than 80 miles to the gallon and use the latest anti-pollution technology.

MCC wants to forge links with travel agents and airlines so that the Smart car is offered when holidaymakers book their package.

Spain, as the most popular holiday destination in Europe, was the obvious candidate for Smart rentals and will get seven dealerships immediately. Three will be in the top tourist areas of Gran Canaria, Palma de Mallorca and Alicante; the other four will be in Madrid, Seville, Barcelona and Valencia.

According to the authorita-

tive Autocar magazine this week, MCC plans to have only 100 dealerships across Europe, all based around major cities. It will be at least the year 2000 before the car goes on sale in right-hand-drive form in Britain.

MCC believes the unique characteristics of the Smart

mean it will meet the demands of holidaymakers, who generally want to travel short distances without spending much on fuel. They hope drivers will be entertained by its cute, futuristic looks and impressed by the ease with which it can be driven and parked.

change

in bans all
ian flights

protests saw
holiday makers

Bargains of the week — from cruising the Grenadines aboard a tall ship to learning to race at Brands Hatch

HOLIDAYS

NINE nights cruising the Grenadines aboard one of the few authentic tall ships still carrying passengers is available through Seafarer Cruising and Sailing between July 4 and the end of October. The price of £1,299 includes flights, a night in a hotel, seven nights full-board cruise and taxes. Details: 0171-234 0500.

AIRTOURS is cutting £120 from the brochure price of a seven-night holiday at Zell-am-See in Austria. Departure is on June 18 from Gatwick and the £259 price includes half board in a three-star hotel. Details: 01706 260000.

AN UNUSUAL weekend tour of RAF wartime bomber bases in Lincolnshire is being offered on July 18 by Whistler Breaks for £183, including two nights half board, lunch, guides and entry fees. Details: 01743 718964.

ARGO Holidays is offering 14 nights self-catering in Paphos for £279. Departure is on June 9 from either Luton or Gatwick and a child goes free if sharing with two adults. Details: 0171-331 7070.

KUONI has seven nights full-board accommodation in the Maldives until July 13 for £585, a saving of £198. Return flights are from Gatwick and

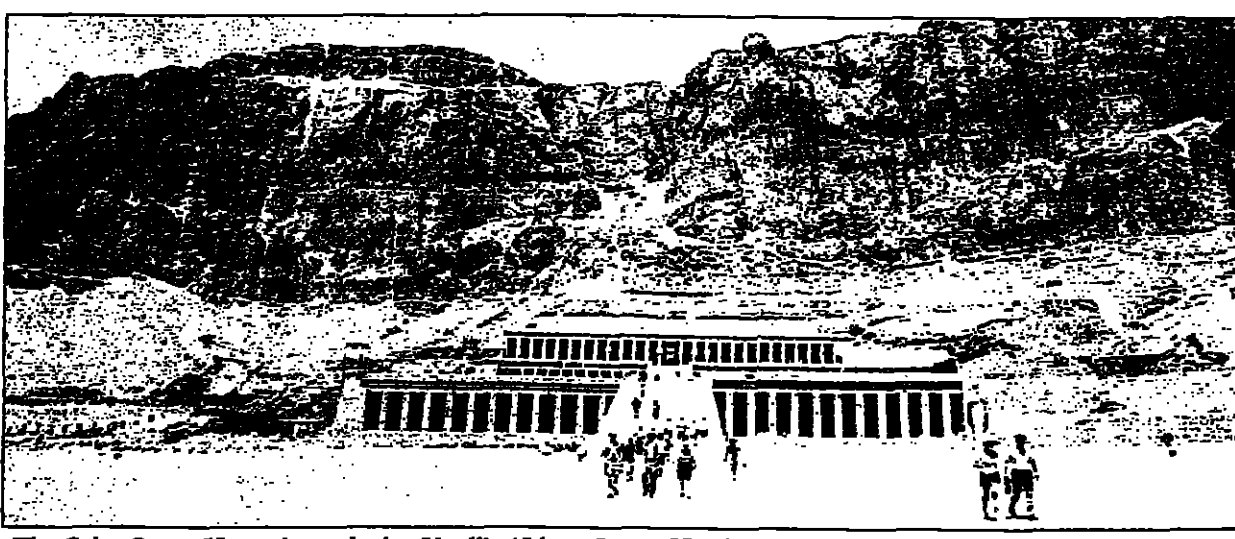
accommodation is at Biyadoo. Details: 01306 743000.

FLY to Barbados on Concorde in August and stay at Cobblers Cove for £2,600. The price — a saving of £400 on the Harlequin Worldwide Travel brochure — includes seven nights accommodation, transfers, Concorde flight out and BA scheduled flight back. Details: 01708 852780.

SEVEN nights self-catering in Benidorm from Gatwick is available through Unijet for £199 on June 3. Details: 0990 336336.

THE price of staying at Sun International's new Sugar Beach resort in Mauritius is being cut from £1,236 per person to £799 for one week's half board. The offer, through Air Mauritius, is valid until the end of July and includes direct flights from Manchester. Details: 0161-498 9909.

BOOK a holiday at the Indian Ocean Beach Club in Mombasa, Kenya, through Somak Holidays and become eligible to spend a night at the Shimba Hills Tree Hotel for £50. Fourteen nights half board at the club from June 8 costs £649, including flights and transfers. Details: 0181-423 3000.



The Cairo Opera House is producing Verdi's *Aida* at Queen Hatshepsut's Temple in Luxor from October 12 to 17. Goldenjoy Holidays (0171-794 9767) offers tickets as part of a seven-night Nile cruise package £729 per person

FLIGHTS

BRITISH Airways has extended its £199 seat sale excursion to Riga and Krakow to cover flights throughout the busy summer. Details: 0345 222111.

VIRGIN Atlantic flights to New York before June 13 cost £235 return through Travelmood. Details: 0171-258 0280.

RETURN Alitalia flights to various destinations in rural Italy, Sardinia and Sicily cost between £155 and £205 when booked by June 6 for

travel before June 30. Details: 0171-306 3000.

BUSINESS-CLASS passengers flying Czech Airline CSA from Stansted or Manchester to Prague can take a companion for half price. Details: 0171-255 1893.

AIR Tickets Direct has a £129 return fare flying British Airways between Edinburgh and Geneva. Book by June 4, travel until June 18. Details: 0990 320321.

FERRIES

HOVERSPEED has a £39, three-day return for Folkestone-Boulogne until June 30 for a car and five passengers. Details from Eurodrive: 0181-324 4000.

WIGHTLINK Ferries has day trips to the Isle of Wight from Lynton or Portsmouth at £45 for a car and four. Details: 0990 827744.

IRISH Ferries has cut fares from Holyhead to Dublin from £248 to £99 for a car and

five adults. The offer is valid, until July 16, on the 15.45 Wednesday crossing, returning at 09.45 any Wednesday. Details: 0990 171717.

DAY trips on P&O Ferries Dover-Calais are available for £16 for a car and driver and £1 for each extra passenger. Details: 0990 980980.

HOVERSPEED has introduced a first-class section on its Dover and Folkestone routes. Details: 0990 240241.

HOTELS

ITT Sheraton is offering a 25 per cent discount on suite prices at its Park Lane Hotel, central London, in August. Prices start at £225 per suite, per night. Details: 0800 353535.

THE Sofitel Getaway invitation programme offers discounts at 54 Sofitel hotels in Europe and America, with rates ranging from £75 to £95 per room, per night. Children under 12 stay free. Details: 0181-741 9699.

SEE Diana Ross live at the National Exhibition Centre on June 27 and stay at the three-star Novotel in Birmingham. The offer, available through Goldenrod, costs £115 per person and includes accommodation based on two sharing, concert tickets and transfers. Details: 0161-238 5206.

THE Ritz Hotel in London is host next week to one of France's top chefs, Joel Robuchon from La Coupole in Monte Carlo, and is offering a special three-course lunch at £32 per person, with a five-course Menu Gourmand at £59. Details: 0171-493 8181.

THE Mark Hotel, New York, has a discount offer on its suites from June 27 to September 7. Prices start at \$395 per suite, per night,

instead of the normal rate of \$625. Offer available through Leading Hotels of the World. Details: 0800 181123.

A BALLOON flight over the Welsh countryside is available at the three-star George Hotel in Chepstow, through Highlife Breaks. Price is £225 per person and includes two nights accommodation and insurance. Details: 0800 700400.

AN EXCLUSIVE fashion show by English Eccentrics, including afternoon tea, is available at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park Hotel in London on June 12. The cost is £18. Details: 0171-235 2000.

A TWO-FOR-ONE lunch offer is available throughout June at the Tamarind Restaurant in London's Mayfair. The three-course lunch menu is priced at £16.50 per person excluding beverages. Details: 0171-629 3561.

LEARN to race on the famous Brands Hatch circuit with the Nigel Mansell racing school, staying at the nearby Brands Hatch Place Hotel. Two nights accommodation (minimum) plus tuition costs £105 per person, per night; the charge is £61 per night for non-participants. Details: 01474 872239.

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Champion driven by insatiable thirst for winners

POLO Windward finish in dominant fashion

By John Watson

MARK AUSTIN'S Windward beat Kim Richardson's Knepp Castle 6-4½ as league one of the tournament for the medium-goal five-chukka Royal Windsor Cup, which has been challenged at Cowdray Park, concluded yesterday.

Knepp's half-goal credit was awarded for their team aggregate of 14 goals in comparison with Windward's 15, but the advantage was quickly overtaken when Windward's pivot player, Juan Bollini, the strongest man on the ground, opened his team's account in the first chukka.

In the second, Knepp's veteran Back, Robert Graham, who formed a clever partnership with his Argentinian No 3, Mariano Zimmerman, converted a 60-yarder to put Knepp back in front, but that proved to be the last occasion on which Knepp were ahead. Although they are a nicely-balanced combination, they were somewhat less well mounted than their opponents.

The difference showed at treading-in time, when Windward were 4-1½ in front. After that, the powerful duo of Bollini and his No 2, Lord Charles Beresford, were mostly responsible for seeing that the ball was chiefly at the net end of the ground.

During the last minute of the game, a cross by Beresford resulted in a successful penalty shot from Zimmerman's mallet that narrowed the margin of the Knepp defeat. Bollini registered five of the six goals scored by Windward.

The Royal Windsor semi-finals are due at Smith's Lawn, Windsor Great Park, tomorrow.

WINDWARD: 1, M Austin (10), 2, Lord C Beresford (6), 3, J Bollini (7), back, A Kirby (2).
KNEPP CASTLE: 1, K Richardson (5), 2, W Healy (3), 3, M Zimmerman (5), back, R Graham (4).

ROB HUGHES



Riding to the finish, there are few jockeys who go to the lengths, the self-sacrificing extremes, that this week will confirm Tony McCoy as the National Hunt champion jockey for the second time. He has contested only two full titles and was champion conditional the season before.

"You get greedy, so you do," McCoy said in an accent sliding between the tones of north and south Ireland. "Or you go anywhere, ride anything for a winning opportunity."

Yesterday, he won the 2.30 at Cartmel, in Cumbria, on Indian Jockey, then flew down to Hereford for two rides in the 7.00, in which he finished runner-up on Spring To It in a typically competitive finish, and the 9.00.

Considering that the championship was in the bag long ago, that he has amassed 157 wins from over 650 rides already this season, this commitment to the very last speaks of an insatiable appetite for the sport. On horseback for 11 months of the year, barring injury, he will cajole, bully, nurse horses on the briefest of acquaintanceships to the winning post giving 100 per cent without fail.

A man of 23, standing 5ft 11in, McCoy does not know what his natural bodyweight would be were he not a jockey. For sure, it would be more than a couple of stones above the ten that, through the jockey's regimen of saunas and lettuce-leaf diet he is prepared to subordinate to his only ambition.

This ultra-committed competitor has a special girl in his life, Chanelle, who works for Blue Thunder clothing, his major sponsor. Her father owns a Galway veterinary practice, Chanelle, he admits,



McCoy reflects on another highly charged season that has brought him a second jockeys' championship. Photograph: Lindsay Kember

has a social life; he squeezes one sparingly into his one free month of the summer. This year, even that is on a tight rein. Having had an enforced three-week break around the Grand National because of concussion, he found that the scales, which he keeps literally at his bedside, do not lie. "After just 11 days off, my ten stone had jumped to 11st 3lb in jeans and a T-shirt. I've been trying to get it all off. I've been struggling and I'll have to keep training through the summer break, refusing, as

usual, invitations to Sunday lunch. The thing I dream about is waking up lighter than I was."

How could they? How could people be so friendly, so caring, so sociable as to invite this skeletal man to their Sunday dining room? He could not, in any event, accept invitations in a week like this, or any other week of the season, for that matter.

On Bank Holiday Monday, his hands were full, riding five winners out of six at Uttoxeter: Wednesday, in almost two

places at once, today at Uttoxeter in the afternoon and Hereford in the evening. On Saturday, the final day of the season, he goes at Stratford and the finale of the jumps season at Market Rasen.

It sounds like a life of perpetual motion, of almost guaranteed entry to the winner's enclosure. However, to glimpse the real McCoy you should travel to Co Antrim, to the village of Toomebridge where, one of six children, his obsession began. Failing that you could rendezvous with him at Towcester last Friday evening where, from three rides, he finished winnerless. "Today, I'd only got chances that were slim," he admitted in the weighing room. Slim chances: £85 plus VAT per

ride, hanging on over distances up to 4½ miles over 30 fences or more, in one particular case on an animal which did not even have the jockey's optimism of a "slim chance". Indeed, standing at the final fence, the hooves thundering towards us, the earth shaking, and McCoy urging a horse that was clear last, Ronnie Beggan, one of his advisers who himself was a successful jockey over jumps for more than 12 years, said: "He's no chance, he's a better chance of being bloody killed!" Judging by the colour that had drained from Beggan's face, it was not a joke, yet McCoy presented the horse at the obstacle with every cavalier instinct in his bones. Safely over, somewhat ex-

hausted and craving a sandwich that he dare not take, McCoy tried to explain his presence at the meeting. There were trainers, including Toby Balding, who started his apprenticeship to English racing, to satisfy. Sure, McCoy knew the horse could not win, just as he had chased around in vain pursuit in an earlier one. "The thing is, I like coming to places like Towcester. I get a feel for the racing here. I like the people; I get to study the form of horses which might win for me in future; and, anyway, you have to do it, it's the job." The job, at least the way McCoy throws himself at it, brings him many of the best horses riding for the Martin Pipe stable for which, McCoy has brought home over 70

"The perils, the pain, all ignored for the pleasures of being champion"

winners this season. Riding for the most prolific trainer and being the hungriest rider, McCoy one day seems destined to erase Peter Scudamore's record of 221 victories in a season. Not this year, not even for McCoy, but he did gallop to the fastest 100 winners on record, win the Champion Hurdle, Cheltenham Gold Cup and Scottish Grand National. All this grown out of an obsession that struck almost before the age of reason.

In Toomebridge, his father, the local joiner, had a passion for horses; he bred a few and looked after a few. His brothers and sisters have grown up to other occupations — working for the Northern Ireland Education Department, hair-dressing or, in the case of Colm, his youngest brother, wondering how to build a future out of being the All-Ireland schoolboy boxing champion. McCoy, however, has always gone his own way.

Initially, it was just a cycling distance to Willie Rock's stables, then, as soon as he was allowed to leave school, to an apprenticeship south of the Irish border with Jim Bolger.

In his mother Claire's car on the way back from signing his apprentice forms, his mother warned: "Anthony, there's nothing else left for you now." McCoy responded: "Mum, if I had brains, I'd have been a brain surgeon." The quote has been stretched, embellished and granted a touch of the Blarney stone. But McCoy said it and meant it. He has not done too badly — he earns a very good living and is looking to buy a house in the Newbury area for around £500,000.

If you look into the eyes, scan the face with skin drawn tight over his cheekbones, you dare not mention Shane Broderick, the Irish jump jockey and his good friend, who still lies perilously ill after sustaining serious neck injuries riding a horse called Another Deadly at Fairyhouse at the end of March.

The perils, the pain, all ignored for the pleasures of the blinkered life of a man maintaining his place as champion jump jockey.

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SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, Bridge Correspondent

In the American Spring Nationals, in March, Geir Helgemo produced the most spectacular play of the year. Barry Rigal reports that the *cognoscenti* discussed the hand in terms not far removed from awe — a rare event when you consider how cynical most experts are when it comes to the ability of others.

| Dealer West | Game all | IMPs |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|
| ♠ 974 ♥ 9752 ♦ K1086 ♣ 92 | ♠ QJ105 ♥ A1064 ♦ 83 ♣ QJ73 | |
| ♠ 82 ♥ KQJ83 ♦ 5 ♣ K10654 | ♠ AK63 ♥ — ♦ AQJ9742 ♣ A8 | |

S 6D 2H All Pass N Pass 4H

Contract: Six Diamonds by South Lead: King of hearts

West's opening was a weak two. Helgemo ruffed the heart lead and drew trumps in one round. His main chance of getting rid of dummy's second club was to find the spades 3-3, so he continued by leading a low spade towards dummy. West played the two, dummy the seven and East won with the jack. East returned the five of spades. How should declarer play? The bidding suggested that the hearts were 5-4, so it seemed that West might well have a little extra distribution to open a weak two on a five-card suit. Thus it was quite likely that West would have five clubs, leaving him with two spades. It seemed from the play to the first round of spades that East had the ten as, holding that card, West might well have played it. East's failure to try a club was also suspicious — his return of a spade might well be trying to stampede South into playing the ace. These are not indications cast in stone, but they were enough to suggest that the spades were distributed as in the diagram. So Helgemo bravely ran the second spade round to dummy's nine. Now he could dispose of one of dummy's clubs on the fourth round of spades. Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in *Sport* and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

Crushing gambit
In the elite tournament in progress in Madrid, Veselin Topalov, the Bulgarian grandmaster, has strengthened his grip on the lead with a crushing victory against Jeroen Piket, the Dutch grandmaster. While his rivals were engaged in drawing their games, Topalov brisily set about the task of demolishing the hapless Piket by offering a pawn sacrifice to control the centre. As if mesmerised by Topalov's active counterplay, Piket huddled his forces on the extreme left flank and resigned when faced with a large loss of material.

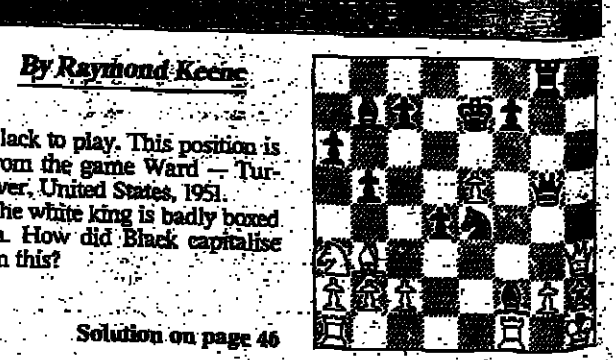
| | |
|--------|----|
| 1. ♠4 | ♠6 |
| 2. ♠4 | ♠5 |
| 3. ♠5 | ♠5 |
| 4. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 5. ♠3 | ♠6 |
| 6. ♠3 | ♠7 |
| 7. ♠4 | ♠4 |
| 8. ♠6 | ♠7 |
| 9. ♠8 | ♠6 |
| 10. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 11. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 12. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 13. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 14. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 15. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 16. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 17. ♠6 | ♠6 |
| 18. ♠6 | ♠6 |

After six rounds, the leading scores are: Topalov 5, Alapian, Iliescu, Beliavsky and Shirov 3½.

Benko Gambit
White: Jeroen Piket. Black: Veselin Topalov. Madrid, May 1997

International all-play-all tournaments with grandmaster participation used to be a comparative rarity. After publicity given to the 1993 world championship match in London between Kasparov and Short, such events have sprung up like mushrooms. A strong tournament in Coudon has attracted two grandmasters, Neil McDonald and Colin McNab, and a number of international-level players including Michael Franklin, Chris Dunworth and Tim Wall. McDonald leads with 3/3.

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in *Sport* and in the Weekend section on Saturday.



WORD WATCH

- AAM**
a. Noah's father
b. A cask
c. Predawn
- BROGGLE**
a. A spook
b. A left cravat
c. To poke
- BELESPRIT**
a. A wit
b. French whisky
c. The bowsprit
- ARGIL**
a. Therefore
b. A flatfish
c. Clay

Answers on page 46

CRICKET: AUSTRALIA'S BOWLERS FULLY STRETCHED BY YOUNG GLOUCESTERSHIRE PAIR

Taylor offered lesson in perseverance

BY MICHAEL HENDERSON

BRISTOL (second day of three): The Australians, with all second-innings wickets in hand, are 58 runs behind Gloucestershire

THE AUSTRALIANS gave their bowlers a thorough work out yesterday, and their response cannot have disheartened them. Although Gloucestershire earned a first-innings lead of 101, with Nick Trainor making a maiden hundred, Mark Taylor saw enough of his three quicker bowlers to know that, whatever the shortcomings of his batsmen, not least himself, Australia will not step naked into the Test series.

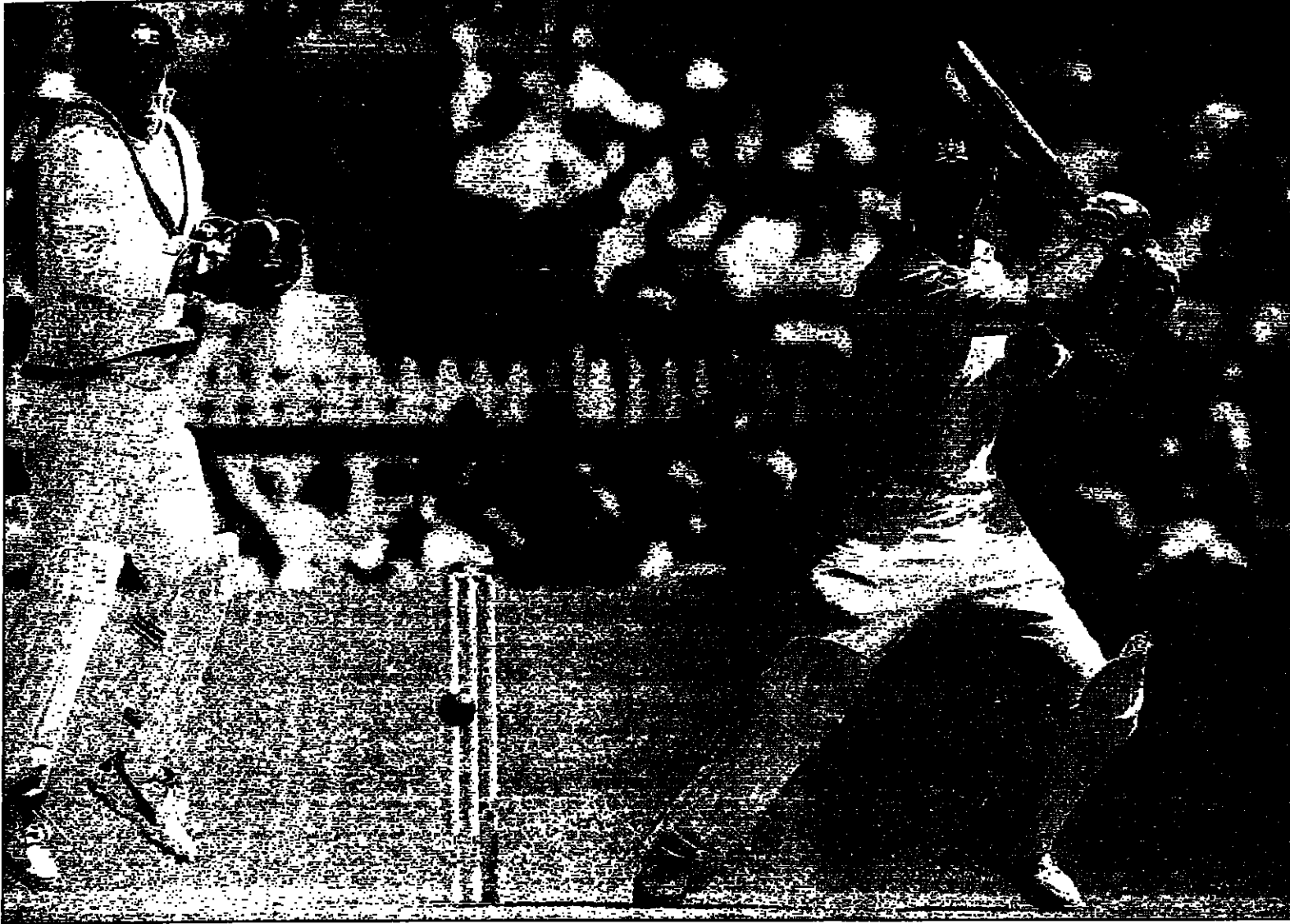
Trainor's century, and his stand of 142 with Rob Cunliffe for the third wicket, provided one of the day's two highlights. The other was a spell of genuinely fast bowling before

David Houghton, the Worcestershire coach, is to leave New Road before the end of the season to become coach of his native Zimbabwe. Houghton, 39, will take up his new post from September 1.

lunch by Jason Gillespie. On a pitch, slow and low, that offered bowlers of his type little encouragement, he clattered Trainor on the helmet and consistently smacked the ball hard into Healy's gloves.

On the quicker pitches he can expect to bowl on in the next three months Gillespie will make a few eyes water. Full marks then to Trainor, only 21 and coming into this game off a "pair" against Essex and three successive ducks in all, for battling it out. The Australian applause when he reached his hundred showed how much they valued it.

There is plenty of talk at the moment of preparing Test pitches that "suit" England. Who do these talkers think they're kidding? The best bowlers in English conditions in recent years have been Terry Alderman and Paul Reiffel. If England want to



Trainor, Gloucestershire's Durham-born opener, punishes a short ball from Warne on the way to his maiden century at Bristol yesterday.

take on Australia at the same game they will find out that Gillespie and Glenn McGrath are just as capable of exploiting sideways movement. They can cut it more viciously than Andrew Caddick, and in Michael Kasprovicz they have a bowler of some pace who can swing it out.

Kasprovicz bowled pretty well yesterday and showed an eager-beaver attitude in the outfield where he held two good catches to dismiss Gloucestershire's run-makers. Cunliffe drove Shane Warne to deep mid-off and Trainor, failing to control a hook, sent it skywards to long leg.

Kasprovicz, who is a tall man, displayed nimbleness of foot to make both catches.

Trainor batted for five hours, hitting 17 boundaries, and, though it was not a flawless innings, he impressed as a well-organised, upright player. He comes from Durham and, as a teenager, wrote to every first-class county trying to make his way in the game after a trial for Durham seconds proved unconvincing.

He played no better stroke than the cover drive off Warne, punched away on the back foot, that took him to his hundred. Cunliffe also batted properly for his runs, and the

sight of these two young Englishmen coming to terms with good Australian bowling made for absorbing cricket.

Gillespie's only wicket of the day came from his slower ball, when he followed through to hold Mark Alleyne's drive right-handed. Gloucestershire's innings was falling apart a bit and it took some nurling and whacking from Martin Ball and Jack Russell, who added 51 for the eighth wicket, to achieve a decent lead.

The Australians, in particular Taylor, were left to bat out an awkward last hour and a half, and they did. Alleyne

entrusted the new ball to Richard Davis, the left-arm spinner and apart from a shout for leg-before when Taylor, 12 at the time, padded the ball away, there were few alarms.

That doesn't mean to say Taylor knocked the cover off the ball. He spent 41 balls on 12 and four of his 19 runs came from a mistfield by Jon Lewis at mid-off. He will have slept more easily last night but he starts all over again today, and what his team really needs is a big hundred.

AUSTRALIANS: First innings 249 (S R Waugh 52, M E Waugh 55, J J Lewis 4 for 88).

GLoucestershire: First innings
A J Wright bow b Gillespie 16
M J Trainor c Kasprovicz b McGrath 121
R P Davis bow b Warne 30
R J Cunliffe c Kasprovicz b Warne 61
R H C Harwood bow b Kasprovicz 15
S Young c Healy b Kasprovicz 1
M W Alleyne c and b Gillespie 20
R C Russell c and b Kasprovicz 25
M C Ball c and b Kasprovicz 4
A M Smith c Gillespie b Warne 4
J J Lewis not out 7
Extras (b 4, lb 5, nb 20) 30
Total 250

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-52, 2-103, 3-243, 4-250, 5-257, 6-258, 7-258, 8-258, 9-258.

BOWLING: McGrath 10-11-31-1; Kasprovicz 21-2-101-3; Warne 35-3-104-4; Gillespie 20-4-66-2; Bevan 12-1-45-0.

Umpires: G I Burgess and P Adams.

Second Innings

RUGBY UNION

Rowell content with progress

FROM MARK SOUSTER IN BUENOS AIRES

JACK ROWELL wore the look of a contented man yesterday. Much of what England have been striving towards came good in the third match of their tour of Argentina and, with the first international against the Pumas only two days away, Rowell could barely conceal his delight at the manner and style in which victory over Argentina A was achieved on Tuesday night by a largely makeshift team.

Ten out of ten was his verdict on an eight-try, 50-point performance that Rowell described as "superb rhythmic football... dynamic, interactive rugby".

"This was just what we needed, a champagne cocktail," Rowell said. "Given that this was the scratchiest of scratch teams to come together like that, it was surprising. Some of the football was literally quite breathtaking, the attitude first class. To see players like [Matt] Allen and [Jos] Baxendale performing like this was enormously satisfying. The team can draw great inspiration from this."

Indeed, the way in which the younger players — all keen to make their mark in the absence of the British Isles contingent — have blended seamlessly into the representative scene here is both a tribute to England's international system and the standard, depth and quality of club rugby.

Perhaps only two of the side that played on Tuesday — Tony Diprose and Martin Haag — will make it into the international team, which is due to be announced tomorrow, but the others have fully justified their inclusion on the tour as part of a close-knit squad, whose camaraderie and spirit is infectious. Mapletob, who put pace on the ball with his incursions from full back, showed character to bounce back by scoring 18 points after his disappointing kicking performance against Buenos Aires, and Danny Grewcock can be pleased with his baptism.

The victory will have given Argentina much to contemplate. Federico Mendez, the Bath and Argentina hooker, was impressed. "England played very good rugby which was important for the mental health of the players," he said. "We can expect the same [on Saturday]. We saw good scrummaging against Buenos Aires and a very good handling game today and also good ball retention."

The handling was impressive, especially in a purple patch during the second half when England scored 34 points without reply. The showstopper another try of individual brilliance by Mike Catt. At times the match



Diprose on verge of debut

resembled a training session, such was the precision of England's play.

Diprose, the captain, will be unlucky if he does not win his first cap after his performance. "He was absolutely majestic," Rowell said. "He has brilliant hands, he was a great driving force and brings others into the game."

International debuts also beckon for Haag and Rory Jenkins, while behind the scrum, Nick Greenstock, in the centre, and Jim Mallinder, at full back, should gain their first England caps, too. If so, Rowell will have capped 16 new players since the game against Italy last November.

Leicestershire ready for new assault on summit

BY SIMON WILDE

NO SOONER had James Whitaker and his Leicestershire side defied all the pundits and carried off the Britannic Assurance county championship last year than commentators and opponents began writing them off a second time. They will never win it again, was the cry. Whitaker's response was simple: "Winning was such a wonderful feeling, we have simply got to do it again."

Leicestershire could be back on top of the table by Monday evening. Gloucestershire, the leaders, are otherwise engaged with the Australians, which leaves the likes of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Glamorgan with opportunities to take their place.

Leicestershire, who lie third, entertain Lancashire at Grace Road and will fancy their chances of getting the better of a team that, bizarrely, is propping up the table after the first month of the season.

When Lancashire last took a share of the championship, in 1980, their star-studded team was in the habit of finishing off unglamorous sides such as Leicestershire in two days and Leicestershire's ambition was not to finish with the wooden spoon. The sparkle is still more in evidence at Old Trafford than Grace Road, but

no longer the most important piece of silverware: time will tell whether Lancashire have the resources to pull themselves round after an unconvincing start.

Lancashire's players are inclined to blame the lifelessness of their pitches for some of their woes, a problem that does not afflict Whitaker's team. The expectation today is that the pitch will again favour the seamers and the home side will leave out both spinners, but they ought to beware: the last time Lancashire played at Grace Road, in 1995, Mills and Mullally were outbowed by Wasim Akram, who won the match for his team with 12

| | P | W | L | D | B | I | Pts |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Glouce (13) | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 16 | 65 |
| Notts (17) | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 54 | |
| Leics (1) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 16 | 50 |
| Glamorgan (10) | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 13 | 47 |
| Warwick (8) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 43 |
| Essex (5) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 39 |
| Middlesex (9) | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 35 |
| Somerset (11) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 15 | 35 |
| Kent (4) | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 34 |
| Yorkshire (6) | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 34 |
| Worce (7) | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 33 |
| Sussex (12) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 30 |
| Durham (18) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 14 | 29 |
| Surrey (3) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 26 |
| Derbyshire (2) | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 16 | 26 |
| Hampshire (14) | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 11 | 25 |
| Northants (16) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 23 |
| Lancashire (15) | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 19 |

(Last year's positions in brackets)

wickets and an unbeaten half-century.

Nottinghamshire are in second place, but take on Kent at Trent Bridge without Robinson and Pollard, both of whom were injured in a remarkable win over Derbyshire last week. Robinson broke his hand and will be out for at least a month; Pollard has a cracked index finger.

Kent have yet to reproduce their spectacular one-day form in the championship but may have lifted themselves with an implausible victory over Sussex at Hove. They expect to be without Headley, who has a recurrence of the back complaint that kept him out of the one-day international at Lord's on Sunday. His absence would effectively rule him out of consideration for the first Test next week.

Glamorgan, who might already be top had they had better luck with the weather, play a Durham side strengthened by the return of Brown in Cardiff. They have lost a total of almost seven days to rain, bad light and hail, denying them probable wins over Warwickshire and Yorkshire.

Caddick will be looking for a convincing performance against Worcestershire at New Road to strengthen his case for inclusion in the England party for Edgbaston.

Injury may lead to Zahid's exit

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE are on the verge of releasing Mohammad Zahid, the Pakistan fast bowler, and going without an overseas player for the remainder of the season (Richard Hobson writes). Zahid, 20, is yet to play for the county because of a back injury and is due to undergo a scan on the problem area today.

Previous tests showed soft tissue damage but, despite a series of injections, the injury has not cleared. "It has been dragging on and we need to sort things out sooner rather than later," Alan Ormrod, the Nottingham manager, said. A decision will be taken by the end of the week.

Zahid's injury is the latest setback to Notts. Chris Cairns, their first-choice overseas player, said he would be unable to bowl this summer because of an ankle problem. After opting not to utilise the New Zealand all-rounder as a specialist batsman, Notts were rebuffed by Lance Klusener, the South Africa bowler.

Ormrod is quickly moving towards the view that, with Cairns signed up for 1998, it would be in Nottinghamshire's long-term interests to buck the trend and back the potential of their England-qualified players.

Home draw fails to lift Surrey's hopes

BY SIMON WILDE

CRICKET'S July cup finals have a habit of serving up modest fare, which makes it all the more enticing that the draw yesterday for the Benson and Hedges Cup semi-finals has kept open the possibility of Kent and Surrey, arguably the two most exciting one-day teams in the country, meeting at Lord's in five weeks.

First of all, Kent must see off Northamptonshire, the losing finalists last year, at Canterbury and Surrey dispose of Leicestershire at the Oval. It would be foolish to discount sides that relish debunking expectations, but the case with which Kent chased 305 to beat Warwickshire on Tuesday and Surrey's formidable strength make defeat for either hard to envisage.

Moreover, by June 10, when the semi-finals take place, Surrey will have their overseas signing, Saqlain Mushtaq, the gifted Pakistan off-spinning all-rounder.

Kent, who have reached more finals — seven — than any other team, but last won the cup in 1978, and Surrey reacted differently to being awarded home ties. Kent delight in playing in front of their own supporters — 6,000 of whom gave them partisan support at the St Lawrence ground against Warwickshire — but Surrey find the Oval strangely intimidating.

For the second time in a fortnight, Adam Hollioake, their captain, voiced his reservations about playing cup-ties there. On the previous occasion, he greeted with relief the prospect of a quarter-final at Chelmsford. Sure enough, Surrey went there and beat Essex with comfort.

Now, they play hosts to Leicestershire on the ground where they have often failed to play to potential in limited-overs games. It is a mystery, as is their failure to find their rhythm this season. "Our

CUP DRAW

| SEMI-FINALS | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Kent | v Northamptonshire |
| Surrey | v Leicestershire |
| Matches to be played on June 10 | |

quarter-final win against Essex was our best performance of the season, without a doubt," Hollioake said. "Before that we had been pretty ordinary and sometimes not even that."

"The Oval is a very busy place. The balcony to our changing-rooms is basically a public walkway. There are a lot of distractions at home. Our crowd are fantastic, they support us all the way, but sitting up on the balcony you cannot hear them."

CYCLING

Four riders banned after tests

FOUR riders were banned from the Giro d'Italia yesterday after failing random blood tests. Vladimir Poulitnikov, of Ukraine, his Italian team-mates, Marco Gili and Roberto Moretti, and the Frenchman, Thierry Laurent, were declared medically unfit to continue the race because their red blood cell count was too high, officials said.

Michel Riviere, the International Cycling Union (UCI) president, said blood samples had been taken from 19 riders an hour before the start yesterday of the eleventh stage over 159 kilometres. The stage was won by Gabriele Missaglia, of Italy, with Pavel Tonkov, the Russian, retaining the overall lead for the ninth day.

Poulitnikov, Gili and Moretti were all from the Kross team. The 31-year-old Ukrainian was the highest-placed of those banned, at 21st overall, 5.22sec behind Tonkov. Last year Poulitnikov finished sixteenth overall in the Giro.

The UCI decided to introduce blood tests in January to try to combat the use of EPO (erythropoietin) and injectable blood-doping substances that simulate altitude training by increasing the number of oxygen-rich red blood cells.

BOXING

Ayers must wait for title chance

BARRY HEARN, the London-based promoter, is to ask the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) to reschedule the postponed world lightweight championship bout between Artur Grigorian, the champion, and Michael Ayers, of Tooting, to the second week of July (Srikumar Sen writes). Grigorian, from Russia, yesterday pulled out of the contest, which is scheduled to take place in Stuttgart tomorrow, because he is suffering from a damaged shoulder.

Ayers, who has been waiting for more than a year for his second attempt at the title, said: "I just don't know what to say. I was due to fly tomorrow. It's unbelievable for it to happen at this stage. All my hard training has gone to waste."

This is the second time that Grigorian has dropped out of a bout with Ayers, but Hearn said that he would not be asking the WBO to penalise the champion. "I could push for an interim championship, but I do not want to make demands because Michael pulled out once, so it is not all their fault," he said. "The fight has to happen as Michael is the mandatory challenger and I am going to ask the WBO to order it be staged six weeks from now."

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Oliver Holt hears another confession from an England footballer

Wright calms the wild child within



The new Wright, at peace with himself after baring his soul, relaxes after training with England at Bisham Abbey yesterday. Photograph: Fiona Hanson

HOT on the heels of Paul Gascoigne, Ian Wright leapt into the psychiatrist's chair at Bisham Abbey yesterday as England's preparations for the important World Cup qualifying match against Poland in Katowice on Saturday grew ever more like a spell-binding group therapy session.

Where Gascoigne had bottled most of it up, his simmering anger at the treatment he and his family have received from photographers and the press alike quite clearly festering below the surface, Wright, for so long the epitome of English football's angry young man, let it all hang out.

Four days after giving what was probably his most impressive performance in an England shirt, leading the line selflessly and menacingly against South Africa at Old Trafford, and capping it off with the winning goal, Wright spoke openly for the first time about the demons that he is trying to control.

In the same way that his England performance convinced many that he still has an international future, even at the age of 33, and elevated him to the status of first attacking reserve behind Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham, so the candour and intelligence of his words may persuade many observers that there is a more thoughtful, likeable side to the striker that most supporters love to hate.

"There are things you can't see sitting in the press box, where I'm right on the edge ready to go off," Wright said, "ready to do the typical Ian Wright thing. But only once this season, with the Peter Schmeichel thing, did I let outside things bother me. I got sent off against Nottingham

Forest, but that was just pure stupidity.

"To be honest, there are a lot of things going on privately with respect to people who I see, who have sorted me out in dealing with the anger. I see a counsellor. Why can't I deal with anger and somebody like Dennis Bergkamp can? It may be naturally in his personality, but anyone should be able to deal with it."

"I don't want people to think I'm

talking about it because I want sympathy. I am going to a counsellor because things are happening to me on and off the pitch that make me realise how lucky I am.

"I don't want to finish up with people disliking me. I've lived on the edge of a lot of emotions and people either love me or hate me, but I have to try to make myself happy and, in the last few games, I have benefited from the counselling."

At times, Wright sounded like an ageing gunfighter, laying down his weapons and opting at last for the quiet life. He admitted he had tried "maliciously" to hurt Schmeichel when he lunged, two-footed, at the Manchester United goalkeeper at Old Trafford earlier in the season — but there was a rider. "I'm glad it didn't harm him," he said.

Mostly, though, Wright's attempt to change his ways is a product of

enlightened self-interest, a means of extending his shelf life by looking after himself in exactly the way Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, has implored Gascoigne to.

"Everything I'm doing is for the longevity of my career," Wright said. "I want to finish off without controversy. I'm tired of it. I'm annoyed with the fact that I have been like that for so long. The counsellor has shown me that I can still channel my aggression in a good way — and smile."

"The sending-off at Forest started it all. I'm so embarrassed by it now. It was a stupid act of petulance by me and I cost the team the game. I didn't need to do it. The important thing with the counselling is the honesty of it. It's like an alcoholic."

"I wish that I had started my career earlier. The discipline of being in football when I was younger might have been good for me, having to do things like cleaning boots and toilets. There is still a lot of the Sunday morning footballer in me."

"But I'm accepting criticism more now and I'm trying not to contribute to it so much. If it's justified, then I deserve a hammering. I'm just trying to cut down the number of justified occasions. I want people to remember me for my goals and that I am trying to play as long as I can at the highest level."

"When I'm on the pitch, I'm a completely different animal and now it's an animal I'm trying to keep more tame. I don't want to be disliked any more. The Man United fans on Saturday could have given me a hard time, but they didn't. I appreciate that. I'm a sofie with a little bit of a devil streak."



The old Wright, launching himself at Schmeichel and the ball. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Ronaldo heads for Internazionale

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

ON TUESDAY, Josep Lluís Núñez announced proudly to the world that Ronaldo, the Fifa world player of the year, was staying with Barcelona. After months of talks about sums of money that resembled especially impressive international telephone numbers, the Brazilian was staying at the Nou Camp until the Millennium and far beyond. It seems Núñez spoke too soon.

Yesterday, he announced that Ronaldo is leaving, almost certainly to join Internazionale in Milan.

"Ronaldo is leaving us,"

Núñez said, confirming that the contract that would have kept Ronaldo in Spain until 2006 and which would have doubled his salary to around £2 million each season was never actually signed when negotiations concluded on Tuesday night, even though agreement appeared to have

been reached. Ronaldo certainly thought so. He had said on Tuesday, while preparing for a match in Oslo with the Brazil squad, that he had agreed a new contract with Núñez and was remaining a Barcelona player.

That was not to be and Núñez said yesterday that Tuesday's talks with Ronaldo's agents had been "artificial" because he believed they [the agents] had already reached an agreement with Inter. "When our meeting was over and we had shaken hands, they spoke for almost an hour with the Italian team," he complained.

According to a Barcelona spokesman, talks broke down because of objections raised by Ronaldo's advisors over the funding of the deal. They felt that the club should provide all the finance instead of bringing in outside sponsors, whose demands could clash with Ronaldo's personal

sponsorship deals. Thus it now appears that 20-year-old Ronaldo has already played his last match at the Nou Camp, at the weekend against Deportivo La Coruña, in which, ironically, he scored the only goal to lift Barcelona within range of Real Madrid at the top of the Spanish League. While there



Ronaldo: gifted

are three games to go in the Spanish league, Ronaldo is committed to play for the world champions as they begin a busy summer in Europe and then in the Copa America, the South American international championship.

Next season, he will almost certainly be playing in Serie A. Last week, Inter were reported to be ready to make a £50 million bid for him, attracted perhaps by his record 34 league goals in his first season for Barcelona as much as his breathtaking natural ability. After a season in which they failed to challenge for the Italian championship, they are determined not to fall short again.

□ Billy McKinlay, the Blackburn Rovers midfielder player, has escaped with a £750 fine after becoming the first FA Carling Premiership player to amass 45 penalty points in a season.

Fans show their anger with sack of tickets

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

SOUTHAMPTON supporters are ready to deposit their expired season tickets outside The Dell to show the club's board the extent of their anger at events leading up to Graeme Souness's resignation as manager.

The club's Independent Supporters Association (ISA) is furious over the resignation of Souness, which was quickly followed by that of Lawrie McMenemy, the director of football. The supporters blame the Southampton board and want Rupert Lowe, the incoming chairman, and all the club's directors to step down.

A public meeting is scheduled to take place at a Southampton hotel tonight and organisers are expecting the 700 capacity venue to be packed.

Clive Foley, the Sisa spokesman, said: "The fans have had enough and feelings are running very high. We anticipate a very large turnout for the meeting. The only language the board of the club appear to understand is money. By collecting the season tickets and dumping them in a sack outside the ground, we want to show them just how much money they stand to lose."

"As far as Graeme is concerned, our position is one of total confidence in his managerial ability and personal integrity. If he were to reconsider his position following this board's resignation, we would back him to the full."

Foley said that members of the board had been invited to attend the meeting, but added: "We think we know what the answer will be."

Uefa comes to the aid of its poor relations

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

AMID the mad, mad money-go-round of world football, Uefa, the sport's governing body in Europe, yesterday introduced a semblance of sanity. It is to establish a fund to provide compensation to amateur and smaller professional clubs when they lose their best players, without a fee, to the larger clubs.

Many of the smaller clubs have struggled to survive since the Bosman ruling of December 1995, which stated that there should be no payments for players once their contracts had ended. The European Union (EU) decreed that footballers were entitled to the same freedom of movement as other EU workers.

However, the decision has threatened the viability of many of the lesser clubs, whose existence over the years has depended almost solely on their nurturing of young players and their subsequent sale. Without receiving any transfer fees, they have little incentive to encourage and develop home-grown talent and little hope of making up the financial shortfall.

Jean Fourmet-Fayard, a member of Uefa's executive committee, said yesterday: "We are looking at a figure of a maximum of SwFr 150,000 (about £67,000) to go to the amateur club or smaller club. This will come from a pool established by money from television revenue."

"The pool is aimed at helping the smaller clubs. When players move across borders from an amateur to a professional club, there is no transfer fee involved at present when the players have finished their contracts."

Mick Michels, a spokesman for Uefa, said: "This situation is also now affecting transfers between clubs in the same country. Uefa has set up this new fund to guarantee the security of the smaller clubs. It

is not a transfer fee as such; it is compensation."

The FA Premier League, which is responsible for the FA Carling Premiership, is also doing its bit to promote football at a junior professional level. From next season, for the first time, it will run the FA Premier Youth League, which will be open to all Premiership clubs and those recently relegated from it.

It is seen as complementing the "Charter for Quality" programme for English football, which was published earlier this month by Howard Wilkinson, the technical director of the Football Association.

"I'm delighted by the vision this shows," Wilkinson said yesterday. "The development is in line with the charter and will undoubtedly lead to greater quality in the years to come."

Players in the youth league will be predominantly under-18. There will be no more than 30 matches per team per season, with a winter break, and they will be balanced nationally and regionally.

Six Premiership players have "lost" goals credited to them during the season. A Premier League panel was set up to determine their validity and half-a-dozen of the 25 viewed have been re-classified as own goals. Egil Olsenstad, the Southampton striker, has thus lost a third of the hat-trick that he claimed in the 6-3 victory against Manchester United at The Dell on October 26.

The players who have been debited are: S Milosevic (Aston Villa) v Wimbledon, Dec 22; J A Forroto (Middlesbrough) v Liverpool, Dec 14; E Olsenstad (Southampton) v Manchester United, Oct 26; C Russell (Sunderland) v Chelsea, Dec 15; A Ward (Derby County) v Chelsea, Mar 1; J Redknapp (Liverpool) v Everton, Apr 16.

Wenger rebuffed over transfers

ARSENÉ WENGER, the Arsenal manager, said last night that he would not be pursuing any further interest in Marcel Desailly, of AC Milan, who has been linked with the Highbury club. Desailly is now likely to sign for Atlético Madrid for somewhere in the region of £7 million.

Wenger also admitted that he had pulled out of the "money-race" for Moussa Saib, the Algeria midfielder, before he joined Valencia, the Spanish club, for £3 million last weekend. Another Frenchman, Jérôme Bonissel, has decided to stay with Deportivo La Coruña rather than join Arsenal.

The importance of Arsenal's wage structure was uppermost in Wenger's mind when considering new signings, as he underlined: "I still want to respect our wages structure. I have told everyone I will sign new players and I am confident it will happen soon, but there is no panic. People should remember we have a very good team already."

"We are in Europe next season and need more players in the squad but agents have put up 25 or 50 names which are just not right. We were never really in the running for Desailly, although I very much like the player, and with

Moussa Saib it just became a money-race for his wages which we did not want to be in."

High on Wenger's list of wanted men are believed to be Marc Overmars, the Ajax and Holland winger, and Graeme Le Saux, the Blackburn Rovers and England wing back, but Wenger said: "I won't discuss any more names. We will make our signings when we are ready but we will be very discreet."

He denied, however, that he was interested only in signing players from his home country, after the arrivals at Highbury of Patrick Vieira and Nicolas Anelka. "So long as they fit into the spirit and structure of our team, the nationality does not matter to me," Wenger said.

The Arsenal manager will be paying the Austrian club Casino Graz £500,000 to secure the services of Alex Manninger, 19, to understudy David Seaman, the England goalkeeper, next season and, last month, Wenger splashed out nearly £2 million to sign Matthew Upson, Luton Town's 18-year-old centre half.

One possible signing mooted during the past season was Ibrahim Ba, of Bordeaux — but Ba is now apparently going to AC Milan for £5 million.

| | |
|--|--|
| CRICKET Tatler's Challenge Series 11.4, final day of first BRISTOL: Gloucestershire v Australia Brisbane Assurance county championship 11.4, first day of four, 104 overs minimum LEEDS: Essex v Yorkshire CARDIFF: Glamorgan v Durham SOUTHAMPTON: Hampshire v Worcestershire LEICESTER: Leicestershire v Lancashire LONDON: Middlesex v Northamptonshire TRENT BRIDGE: Nottinghamshire v Kent WORCESTER: Worcestershire v Somerset | |
| RUGBY UNION Tour match Bay of Plenty v Ireland Dev XV (at Rotorua, 3.35pm) | |
| OTHER SPORT BADMINTON: World championships (in Glasgow) SPEEDWAY: Elite League (match v Belle Vue, 7.30), Premier League (Sheffield v Belle Vue, 7.30), Premier League Cup (Sheffield v Arena Essex, 8.0) | |

AT LEAST THERE'S ONE SET OF GERMANS GUARANTEED TO PERFORM WELL UNDER PRESSURE

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CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Principia matrimonia: if it moves, chase it

Real philosophers, who ponder the deep mysteries of the universe, are different from you and me. We might spot a pretty woman in a glossy magazine and merely wonder who she might be. But a truly great thinker such as Bertrand Russell could look at the very same photograph and focus his intellect on the more complex conundrum of why he hadn't slept with her yet.

Bertrand Russell: Search for Love (BBC2), the first in a new series of *Reputations*, left you with the feeling that no woman was in his company for long without him making a pass. This was a man who reputedly set to be delivered to him like the World Service news on the hour, every hour. Not that it made him very happy. Solving the riddles of mathematics was Russell's way of escaping a miserable childhood and the chill of human despair. But somehow when it came to sex, he always managed to

make two plus two equal five. He was married four times, like a fussy diner in a restaurant whose enthusiasm for the dish he ordered has waned by the time the waiter brings it on a plate. So in between these main courses, Russell snatched on dozens of affairs — students, mistresses, friends' wives, his children's governesses, even his daughter-in-law according to one account. Almost all of them ended in heartache.

"Every family he had," says his granddaughter Felicity, chiselling away at Russell's reputation, "it seems every relationship with children and women disintegrated and ended usually with the destruction of their minds. Then he would just walk off and leave the bits." Ouch.

His conquests included Evelyn Whitehead, the wife of his former teacher at Cambridge, and the actress Colette O'Neill. That darling of the Bloomsbury crowd,

Lady Ottoline Morrell, reduced Bertrand to Mills & Boon prose the day after meeting her, he wrote: "I long to be with you in beautiful places, where your own beauty and the beauty you create will be in harmony with other things."

A more infamous bedmate T.S. Eliot's mentally unstable first wife, Vivien Ray Monk, who is consultant to Denys Blackway's grimly watchable two-part documentary (the second half goes out next Wednesday), established the length and breadth of Russell's long affair with Mrs Eliot in his recent biography of the philosopher. Russell behaved deviously and cruelly throughout this relationship; he once even described his own conduct as "loathsome". Stage plays tend not to spawn sequels (why not Shaw's *Man II* or *Waiting For Godot* by Samuel



Joe Joseph

Beckett?), but there seem to be ample grounds for *Tom and Viv* to be updated with *Berrie and Viv*. If you unzip your files this often, and this cautiously, but do not possess Russell's IQ, nobody tries to explain or understand your sex drive. His IQ was what saved him for a while. The philosopher Roger Scruton says that Russell's work became a balm for the turmoil in his underpants: "Knowing

that he could not achieve any stability in his emotional life, he took refuge in the solidity of mathematical structures."

We would have less evidence against Russell's IQ, but not been such a prolific writer: 70 books, 2,000 articles and so many letters that he deserved his own postal service. Many of the 4,000 letters he wrote were to various lovers, recounting all the hanky-panky he was up to with other mistresses.

This documentary pretty much ignores Russell's philosophy in favour of his sex life. Oliver James, a psychologist, followed Paul McKenna in the Chair (BBC2). But we ended up somewhere different. "When did you have your first sexual experience?" he asked. "About 18," replied Britain's most famous hypnotist. "Really?" snapped James, incredulously. Reputations managed to poke around for an hour in Bertrand

Russell's sex life — often in places you wouldn't care to poke without washing your hands afterwards — without emitting any whiff of prurience. But just 20 minutes' worth of James chatting to McKenna was like eavesdropping on a dull bike-shed conversation about McKenna's schoolboy days. "Did you get off with girls when you were 16?" James asked, like a weary 13-year-old. Is James off-screen because he is too embarrassed to show his face?

On BBC1 *Firefighters*, the first of a six-part series shadowing two Liverpool fire crews, got off to a fast start. Too fast: the driver of the Red Watch engine crashed en route to a blaze. White Watch, meanwhile, was tackling a fire at the Mayflower Chinese restaurant.

Just when the crew thought the fire had been doused, an upper floor of the Mayflower burst into

flames. That is the trouble with Chinese restaurant blazes: you put out one fire and half an hour later you have to put out another. It is known as a "flashover": the contents of a room get so hot that they spontaneously combust. Sounds like Bertrand Russell. After the fire, you have to play Sherlock Holmes to work out how it started. At the Mayflower it was an electrical fault in a hand-dryer in the men's lavatory. It makes you wonder whether life as a firefighter might have suited Russell: it offers both emotional excitement and a chance to test your analytical powers.

Philosophy and firefighting have a lot in common. You can imagine Socrates saying "the unexamined life is not worth extinguishing". Although having seen the Mayflower burn, we now know that Heraclitus was wrong when he said "you can't put out the same fire twice".

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (34078)
 - 6.25 BBC Breakfast News (39436)
 - 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (1356900)
 - 9.20 Style Challenge (607147)
 - 9.45 Kilroy (7362165)
 - 10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (74436)
 - 11.00 News (7) regional news and weather (7106910)
 - 11.05 The Great Escape (7) (7563610)
 - 11.35 Real Roads (945064)
 - 12.00 News (7) regional news and weather (7333881)
 - 12.05pm Call My Bluff (8551287)
 - 12.35 Mary Berry at Home (932287)
 - 1.00 News (7) and weather (32523)
 - 1.30 Regional News and weather (8615690)
 - 1.40 The Weather Show (9405287)
 - 1.45 Neighbours (7) (4032622)
 - 2.10 Quincey with Jack Klugman (6084691)
 - 2.55 Through the Keyhole (6750184)
 - 3.20 Closest Secrets (6894455)
 - 3.30 Playdays (7) (8613455) 3.50 Postman Pat (8134349) 4.05 Fido, the Cat (7053981) 4.20 Julia Jekyll and Harriet Hyde (7051146) 4.35 Return to Jupiter (7) (725455)
 - 5.00 Newsround (7) (4056287)
 - 5.10 No Sweat (7) (6752813)
 - 5.35 Neighbours (7) (7) (903962)
 - 6.00 News (7) and weather (813)
 - 6.30 Regional News Magazine (185)
 - 7.00 Watchdog Healthcheck: Alice Bear puts more medical matters under the microscope, with reports from John Nicolson and Angela Rippon (7) (7839)
 - 7.30 EastEnders: Lorraine comes to a painful decision about her future in Albert Square; Tony hides the truth about his budding romance from Simon (7) (349)
 - 8.00 Animal Hospital: Prof Harris bids farewell to the popular patients at the Harpenden Veterinary Practice (7) (9287)
 - 8.30 Keeping Mum: Peggy sets out to prove to Andrew that she's not really a nuisance. With Stephen Cole, Martin Ball and David Hogg (7) (5804)
 - 9.00 News (7) regional news and weather (4146)
 - 9.30 999: The stories of the amateur pilots lost in cloud when their plane ran out of fuel at 30,000 ft; a woman who saved herself from choking and the one-year-old facing death unless a heart could be found within three days (7) (885252)
 - 10.20 The Lying Game: Angus Deaton pays tribute to workers who fly in the line of duty (7) (84271)
 - 0.55 Question Time: David Dimbleby chairs tonight's programme from Manchester (624548)
 - 12.00 Making the Case for Murder: The Howard Beale Story (1999) The true story of a brutal attack on three black men by a gang of white youths in the New York community of Howard Beale in 1986. Tension mounts when the police seem to be wholly uninterested in the incident. With David T. Weaver and Joe Martin. Directed by Dick Lowry (7) (7363)
 - 1.30am VideoPlus+ (3616382)

- BBC2**
- 6.00am Open University: Nerves (8832455)
 - 6.25 Insect Hormones (881962) 6.50 Regulation and Control (802875) 7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (3294165)
 - 7.30 Freeman Sam (4223177) 7.40 Eek! the Cat (739542) 7.45 Thundercats (739813) 7.50 Busted Treasure (1516252) 8.10 Teenage Turtles (1546165) 8.35 Blue Peter (3607349)
 - 9.00 The Raccoons (78994) 9.30 Sweet Valley High (582504) 9.55 Puddingtime Peas (3423417) 10.00 Teletubbies (17729) 10.30 The Adventures of Skipper (72078) 11.00 Madras Jeffery's Flavour of India (36349) 12.00 Making Tracks (69556) 12.30pm Working Lunch (16900)
 - 1.00 Freeman Sam (13827748) 1.10 Cartoon (6066822)
 - 1.25 The Girl Most Likely (1958) Musical comedy with Jane Powell, Cliff Robertson and Tommy Noonan (557602)
 - 3.00 News (6881981) 3.05 Making Babies (8475962) 3.55 News 4.00 Bookclubbers (5954504) 4.25 Feady, Steady, Cook (5957891) 4.55 Esther (1854717) 5.30 Today's the Day (542)
 - 6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Quark heads for Earth to enrol Nog in Starfleet Academy, but their reception at Starfleet, New Mexico in July 1947 is destined to become a close encounter of the worst kind (7) (771097)
 - 6.45 Space Precinct (7) (91959)
 - 7.30 East Report on racial tension in Birmingham, Bradford (7) (691)
 - 8.00 Out and About (7829) WALES: 8.00 Books in Hay (7829)

- HTV**
- 6.00am GMTV (4299558)
 - 9.25 Supermarket Sweep (7) (6025436)
 - 9.55 Regional News (7) (443271)
 - 10.00 The Time, the Place (91382)
 - 10.30 This Morning (7) (62362542)
 - 12.20pm Regional News (7) (879165)
 - 12.30 ITN News (7) (815184)
 - 12.55 Wish You Were Here (7) (8980875)
 - 1.25 Home and Away (7) (7081981)
 - 1.50 Afternoon Live (4022892)
 - 2.20 Vanessa: Child Stars (40416233)
 - 2.50 Afternoon Live (2135813)
 - 3.20 News (7) (8898271)
 - 3.25 Regional News (7) (6897542)
 - 3.30 The Riddlers (7) (8221829) 3.40 Wizardia (7) (779436) 3.50 Rupert (5958610) 4.15 Transylvania Pet Shop (7) (4571691) 4.40 Sweet (7) (716707)
 - 5.10 A Country Practice (7) (7478097)
 - 5.40 ITN News (7) (186369)
 - 6.00 Home and Away: Jesse wonders if he made the right choice between Selina and Chloe (7) (894165)
 - 6.25 HTV West Tonight (933691)
 - 6.30 The West Tonight (233)
 - 7.00 Emmerdale: Charlie gets Mandy into trouble with a shop security guard (7) (207)
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 - 6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (95417)
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RACING 40
McCoy greedy to add further honours

SPORT

THURSDAY MAY 29 1997

Trainer offers lead to troubled Taylor



Fitness decisive as unfancied hosts rise to the occasion

Lions flattered by late surge

Border 14
British Isles XV 18

FROM DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT
IN EAST LONDON

SO MUCH for preconceptions. Border, the self-styled "heart of the Sunshine Coast", produced sweeping rain, a heavy pitch and very nearly defeat for the British Isles by one of the weakest combinations that they will meet on their tour of South Africa. The Lions, breathing hard, looked a woebegone team compared with that which began the tour so well on Saturday.

They might have hoped to be more at home on a playing surface that oozed water with every footprint, but Border, summoning up memories of a famous day in 1955 when they beat Robin Thompson's Lions — eight of that team paraded at the interval — dominated possession and, with only seven minutes remaining, led by four points. That the Lions then scored eight points to claw back the advantage owed more to superior fitness and a dogged courage than any great skill.

Indeed, the entire 80 minutes was not so much a chapter but a complete novel of mistakes and misjudgment, emphasised by the loss with a damaged ankle of Scott Gibbs early in the second half.

Gibbs leaves for Cape Town this morning, in advance of the main party, for expert assessment of his damaged ankle ligaments, the positive outcome of his injury being the introduction to the side of Alan Tait, who has been a shadowy figure thus far. A virus affected Tait, the



Bentley, who opened the scoring for the Lions with a try inside three minutes, skips a tackle in the mud of East London yesterday

Newcastle centre, last week, but he made an immediate impact on a back division that, with the exception of the first few minutes, had lost its way. That this was so was due, in no small way, to the refereeing interpretation of second-phase

ball: the most telling statistic of the match was the 21 scrums awarded to Border compared with a mere ten to the Lions. Had Doddie Weir and Jeremy Davidson not played so well at the lineout to compensate, the Lions might well have gone down to the province ranked eleventh in South Africa.

Ian Snook, the New Zealander who coaches Border, was frank in his assessment of the Lions. "I thought they would create a lot of difficulty for us up front and have far greater control in the forwards," he said.

Instead, Wainwright's pack slipped and slithered and their tackling could not force the turnovers from which the back division, despite Paul Grayson's uncertain form, might have benefited.

Grayson has not played for

three months, so he might have been forgiven his display in the most difficult of conditions. Yet his failure to convert five kicks at goal will prey on his mind, for he could have created a valuable breathing space after John Bentley gave the Lions the best of starts by scoring within three minutes.

There was, though, a singular lack of continuity and an inability to control the muddy ball that gave Border — notably Delarey du Preez, the tight-head prop, and John Bradbrook, the New Zealand-born scrum half — the chance to prosper.

The best of the Lions was seen in the creation of Bentley's try, Underwood accepting Grayson's chip and a swift ruck giving Stimpson the chance to feed his wing, Stimpson, full of running,

looked the most potent threat and will prosper more when he can keep his feet — the surface was so slippery that he keeled over at his first attempt at goal.

However, Greg Miller suffered no such problem. His first penalty goal gave Border just the encouragement they needed and their defence held up well. The Lions may have dominated in territorial terms, but they conceded the ball far too frequently for comfort.

Miller might have given Border the lead with a second penalty goal, but Border found little penetration in midfield and Bateman, hacking through, caught Bennett in his own 22 to establish the scrum from which the Lions scored their second try. Eric Miller picked up the swiftest of heels and, though he was

held on the line, Regan, erupting through the mêlée, scored the try.

Relief lasted no more than three minutes. Grayson scooped up a loose ball in his own 22, but his pass fell to Hechter, who sent Claassen clearing for the try that gave the Lions the most tenuous of interval leads at 10-8.

Within three minutes, even that comfort was snatched from them as Miller kicked his second penalty goal and Gibbs departed on a stretcher, at the same time as Molokane, his opposite number.

The introduction of Dawson, as well as Tait, helped to bolster confidence, even though Miller raised local enthusiasm with his third goal. The Lions reverted to basics and, from Weir's lineout catch ten metres out, Wainwright was forced over for a try, even though the Border defence believed that they had held him up. Stimpson's late penalty goal only embellished a margin that deserved to be no wider.

SCORERS: Border: Try: Claassen, Penalty goal: Miller (3). British Isles XV: Try: Bentley, Regan, Wainwright. Penalty goal: Stimpson.

BORDER: R Bennett, K Hilton-Grange, G Hechter, K Molokane, A Claassen, G Miller, J Bradbrook, H Kik, R van Zyl (captain), D du Preez, M Sweet, S Botha, J Gaining, A Botha, A For. Molokane replaced by D Medza (45min). Gaining replaced by L Buleway (74). A Botha replaced by D Coetzee (80).

BRITISH ISLES XV: T Stimpson (captain), J Bentley, J Underwood, A Bateman (captain), S Botha (captain), P Grayson (captain), M Regan (captain), D Young (captain), G Weir (captain), J Bennett, K Hilton-Grange, G Hechter, K Molokane, A Claassen, G Miller, J Bradbrook, H Kik, R van Zyl (captain), D du Preez, M Sweet, S Botha, J Gaining, A Botha, A For. Molokane replaced by D Medza (45min). Gaining replaced by L Buleway (74). A Botha replaced by D Coetzee (80).



Davidson and Wainwright, kneeling, in support as Regan scores the Lions' second try

Athletics gets set for new start

In the light of a future ban on handguns, David Powell looks at attempts to replace the sport's traditional pistol

ATHLETICS starters, like football referees, are rarely noticed until controversy strikes. They may appear obdurate on occasions but, as well as being dedicated, they can also be sensitive and humorous people.

Take the starter who, having gone through the 1932 Olympic Games without having to recall a false start, shed a tear when the women's sprint hurdles blimished his perfect record at the 1936 Games. One clean start to a starter is satisfying, a succession of them positively uplifting.

Or take the starter who turned his sense of humour on Dean Smith, a 1952 Olympic sprint relay champion. Smith was often accused of jumping the gun and it is said that, when he raced in Texas, his home state, a local starter saw a flyer coming. "Get to your marks, get set ... go Dean," the starter bellowed, before firing his gun.

The gun has been a part of athletics for more than a century, introduced when the system of starting — by mutual

consent — lost favour. Now, though, the traditional starter's pistol is facing extinction in Great Britain. A ban on all handguns by the end of the year appears likely in the wake of Dunblane.

While it remains unclear whether starters may be allowed exemption, Richard Float, the British Athletic Federation's (BAF) appointed expert, believes that, from a moral and practical viewpoint, the sport must in any case prepare itself for abandoning cartridge guns. "Public opinion is against firearms and, as handguns disappear, there are going to be all sorts of problems in obtaining cartridges and spares," Float said.

The BAF has asked Seiko to develop an electronic gun with flash (for manual timing), which would meet the needs of the sport. "If we are going to

lose guns, it is urgent that we get a satisfactory alternative," Float said. "There is not a satisfactory alternative anywhere in the world that anybody I have spoken to knows about."

Seiko, the supplier of timing equipment for the world championships in Athens this summer, expects to have two alternatives developed through HS Sports Ltd (HSSL) on offer by next winter — a simple portable electronic gun and amplifier, which would serve small athletics meetings, and a more sophisticated system, which is a mini-version of their world championships equipment.

"It is hard to make a gun sound electronically," Susan Boobyer, of Seiko, said. "It is a short sound, without too much fuzziness around the edges. Our first attempt, at the 1995 world championships in

Gothenburg, was not received particularly well but, by Athens, we will have an improved gun sound."

"The full Seiko system includes starting, reaction, photo-finish and clocks on the field that have unofficial times. What HSSL and BAF want is a little stand-alone thing that can have other systems added on."

That will come with one lightweight loudspeaker for easy movement between, say, the start of the 100 and 200 metres. The more sophisticated system, which Boobyer expects to cost less than £1,000, will have loudspeakers for each lane, ensuring that the athletes farthest from and closest to the starter hear the gun at the same time.

"It is more difficult to make a smaller version with the same power," Boobyer said. A "stand-alone" version developed earlier by Seiko is too costly and of unacceptable sound quality. However, by next season the technology should be ready. The starters have been called to their

Ince ready to play key role against Poles

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

WHEN Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, talks about Paul Ince, the international midfielder, it is easy to detect a tone of reverence in his voice. It is simple to explain: Ince is the focal point of the England team — the energy, the enforcer — and Hoddle dares not contemplate having to select a side without him.

It was, thus, a relaxed Hoddle, at England's training camp at Bisham Abbey, Marlow, yesterday, who announced that Ince should be fit for the group two World Cup qualifying match against Poland in Katowice on Saturday. Had the news been less favourable, his mood would surely have cast a dark shadow on an otherwise calm, cloudless day beside the Thames.

Although Ince had travelled from Italy with a knee injury, the prognosis was good. "Paul did not train yesterday, but I'm hoping he'll be able to take part in some of the training session today," Hoddle said. "We'll be trying to get him through the session after he has some more treatment in the morning."

"He had an X-ray to check things out and thankfully there are no complications. He's just taken a nasty kick on the back of the knee. I've spoken to him about the game, he's confident about it and, already talking about playing."

Ince's inclusion is vital in Katowice, where the atmosphere is likely to be heavy with hostility. David Barry, of Newcastle United, may provide the out-and-out combative qualities that will be so important; Paul Gascoigne, of Rangers, will fit here and there and attempt to dredge up moments of inspiration from days gone by.

Yet it is from Ince that Hoddle will expect a combination of both — aggression allied to artistry — and perhaps more. Graham Taylor, the former manager, might have once labelled Ince as one of his "headless chickens" when England scrambled a 1-1 draw in Poland four years ago, but Hoddle sees only a wise, mature performer.

That Ince, 29, is likely to accept a two-year extension to his contract with Inter, having already spent two seasons in Milan, should benefit him further. "Playing in Italy has

almost certainly added something to Paul's game," Hoddle said. "He was a very good player when he left Manchester United; he's an even better player now."

"He has met the challenges, on and off the pitch, and dealt with them. He has coped and come through a more accomplished player. He's still got the tenacity to win the ball, but he's got a calmer head on his shoulders. He's still a winner, he always wants to win, but he is more aggressive within himself rather than with opponents."

Hoddle believes that the only chink in Ince's armoury is his lack of goals. He has scored only twice in 29 international appearances. "He gets in good positions and he makes things happen around him," Hoddle said. "He makes goals and he wins penalties. If he can perhaps become a better finisher, then you'd have an even more complete player."

Gascoigne's role, feeding off and creating from the possession earned by Ince and Barry, is similarly crucial. The first

Wright's new goal 44
Ronaldo deal founders ... 44

stage of his international rehabilitation, in the 2-1 victory against South Africa at Old Trafford on Saturday, went relatively smoothly until he was injured by a clattering late tackle in the final minute of the game.

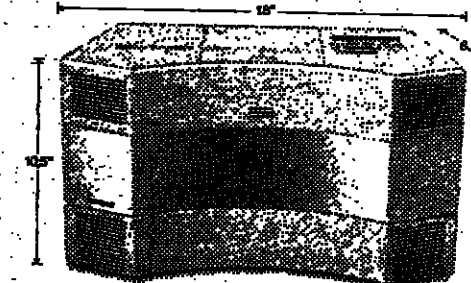
Again, though, Hoddle offered good news. Gascoigne, 30 on Tuesday, was recovering swiftly from a bruised calf muscle. "It has settled down nicely and he'll be training at 100 per cent today," Hoddle said. "I've no real need to bring anyone else into the squad."

Bisham Abbey offers a stark contrast to Katowice and Hoddle made the most of it before the England party's scheduled departure today. He smiled a lot and joked often, even teasing his inquisitors when initially asked about Ince's health. "It's not good," he said. "He fell down the stairs celebrating Gascoigne's birthday."

Were it true, heaven knows what his mood might have been. England without Ince, in Hoddle's eyes, does not bear thinking about.

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